



# West of Ireland Sea Angling Guide

## *Clew Bay - Mullaghmore*

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Iascach Intíre Éireann  
Inland Fisheries Ireland





### Getting to the West Coast

**Roads:** The west coast can be accessed by way of the N4, N5, & M6 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 16, 22-25, 30 & 31 beneficial when visiting the area covered in this guide. These are available from most newsagents and bookstores.

Maps, layout & design by Shane O'Reilly. Inland Fisheries Ireland.

Text by Norman Dunlop, Kevin Crowley & Bryan Ward.

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Tourist Information: Failte Ireland provide information on accommodation, places to eat, attractions, how to get around and much more at [www.discoverireland.ie](http://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](http://www.ryanair.com)  
[www.aerlingus.com](http://www.aerlingus.com)  
[www.irelandwestairport.com](http://www.irelandwestairport.com)  
[www.aerarann.ie](http://www.aerarann.ie)  
[www.dublinairport.com](http://www.dublinairport.com)  
[www.shannonairport.com](http://www.shannonairport.com)

##### Land:

[www.irishrail.ie](http://www.irishrail.ie)  
[www.buseireann.ie](http://www.buseireann.ie)  
[www.gobus.ie](http://www.gobus.ie)  
[www.citylink.ie](http://www.citylink.ie)

##### Sea/Ferries:

[www.stena ferries.org](http://www.stena ferries.org)  
[www.irishferries.com](http://www.irishferries.com)  
[www.brittanyferries.ie](http://www.brittanyferries.ie)

##### Weather:

[www.met.ie](http://www.met.ie)  
**Ireland Maps:**  
[maps.osi.ie/publicviewer](http://maps.osi.ie/publicviewer)



**Be biosecurity aware!**

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

For information and to report

**LO-CALL: 1890 34 74 24**



# **West of Ireland Sea Angling Guide**

## **Clew Bay - Mullaghmore**



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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, north through Achill Island, Blacksod Bay, the Mullet Peninsula and Broadhaven Bay, continuing around the wonderful north Mayo coastline past Downpatrick Head to Killala Bay. From the spectacular Strand at Enniscrone, the angling potential continues around the County Sligo coastline to include Ballisodare Bay, Strandhill and Sligo Bay, north through Streedagh Strand and on to Mullaghmore.

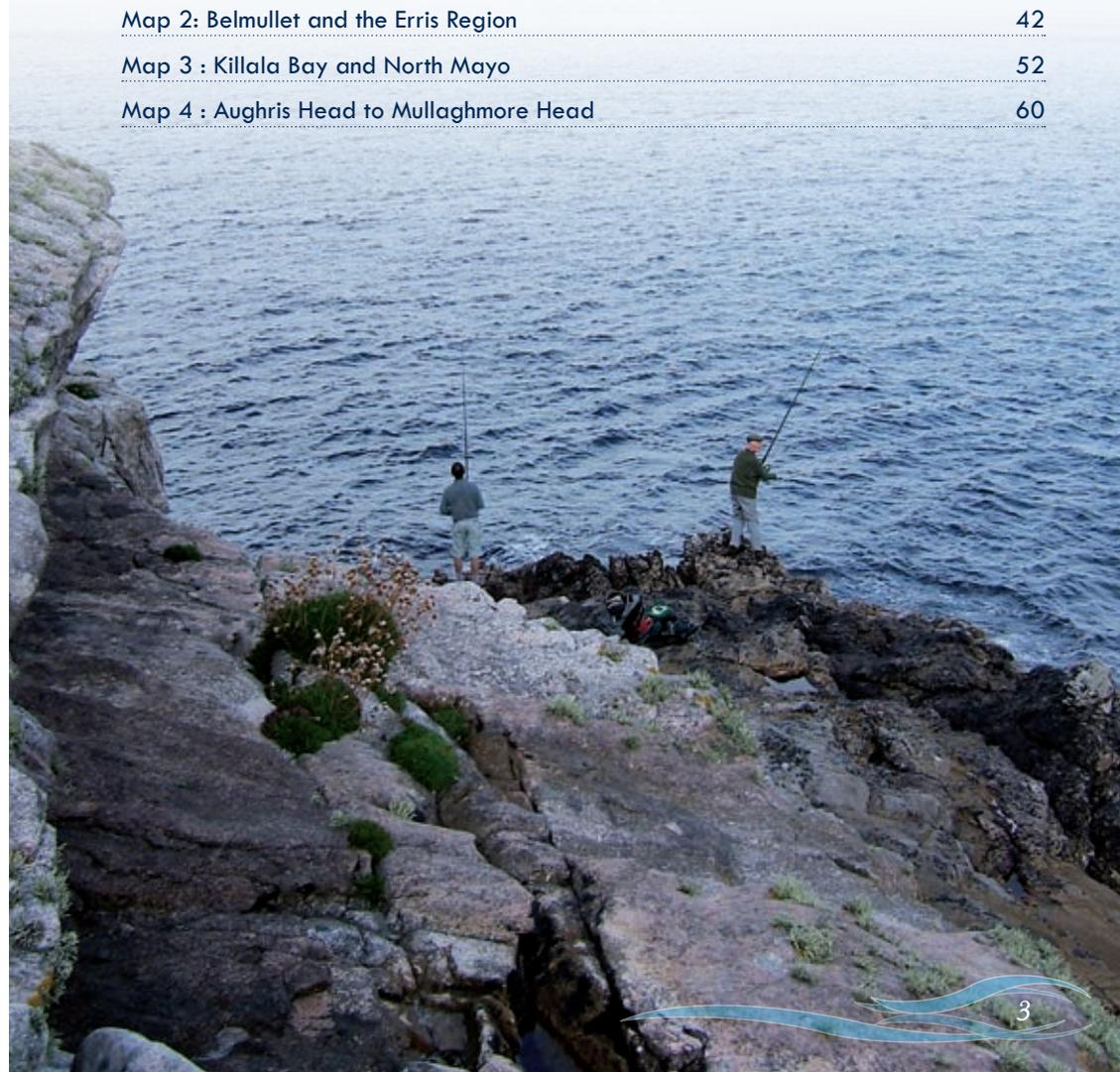
The guide is in no way comprehensive, and the list of marks and venues is just a sample of what is available. There are literally hundreds of shore marks in the region that have rarely, if ever, been fished, and the potential waiting to be explored is immense. Getting off the beaten path and trying a 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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## 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)96 22788 W: [www.fishinginireland.info](http://www.fishinginireland.info) E: [ballina@fisheriesireland.ie](mailto:ballina@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](http://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](http://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](http://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.ifsa.ie](http://www.ifsa.ie)



## Weather Forecasts

Weather forecasts are broadcast daily on RTÉ Radio, television and at [www.rte.ie](http://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](http://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](http://www.sailing.ie) or [www.pocketsizetides.com](http://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](http://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.

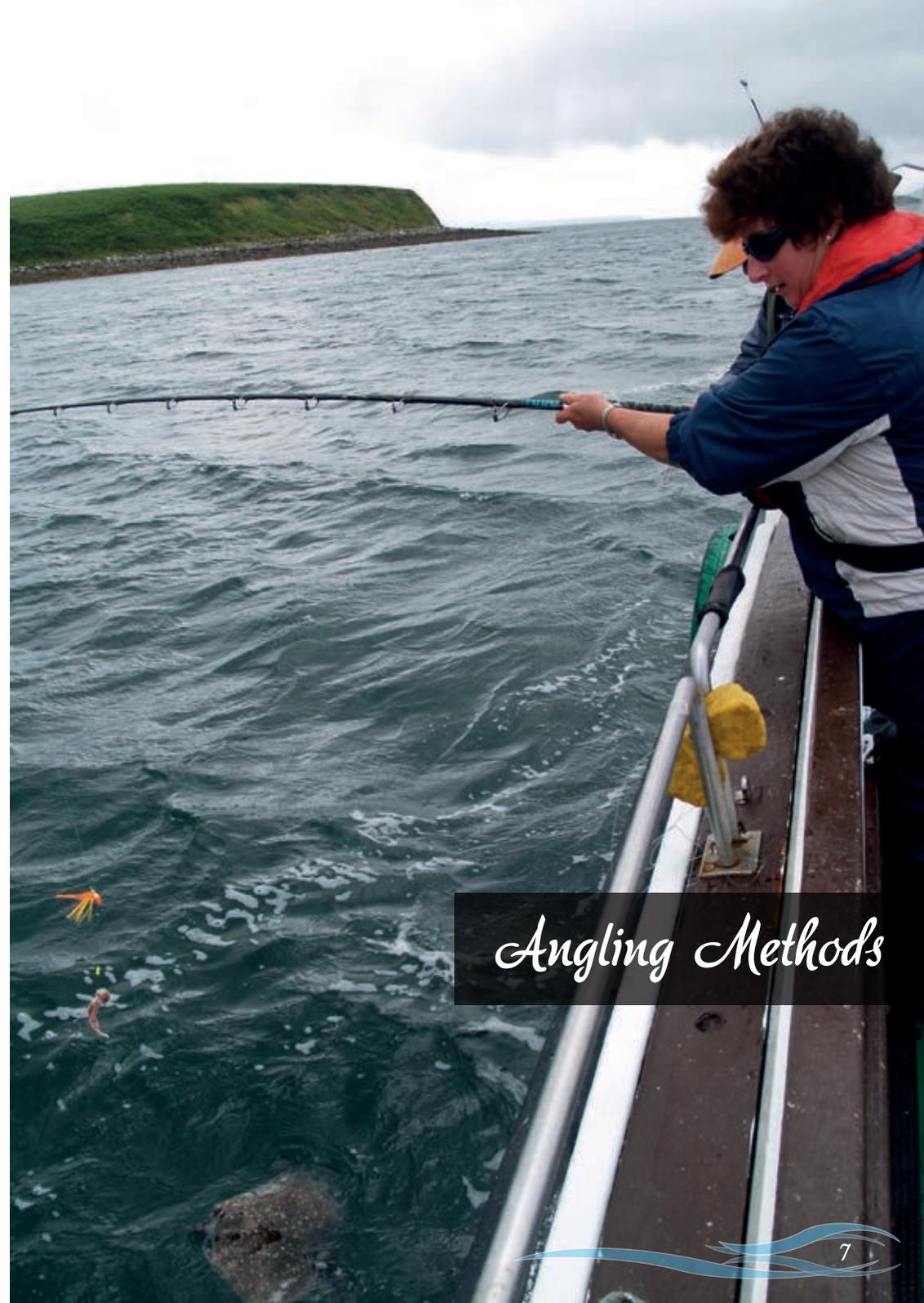
## Safety at Sea

Anglers at sea in boats of less than 7 metres are required by law to wear lifejackets. Lifejackets are recommended anyway, even for fishing from the rocky shore. Although usually safe, there is a risk of strong winds and rarely-experienced freak waves. Licensed angling boats are required to carry a full complement of safety equipment. Users of dinghies or small boats should carry a flare pack in case of emergencies.

Many anglers enjoy a lifetime during which no such emergency ever arises – but the sea can always do unexpected things – and that is when life jacket and flare pack make all the difference between an adventure and a tragedy. It is always wise for both boat and shore anglers alike to inform their hosts of where they are going and when they should be expected back. Local advice should be obtained and respected.

## 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.



## 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](http://www.osi.ie)

## 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 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.

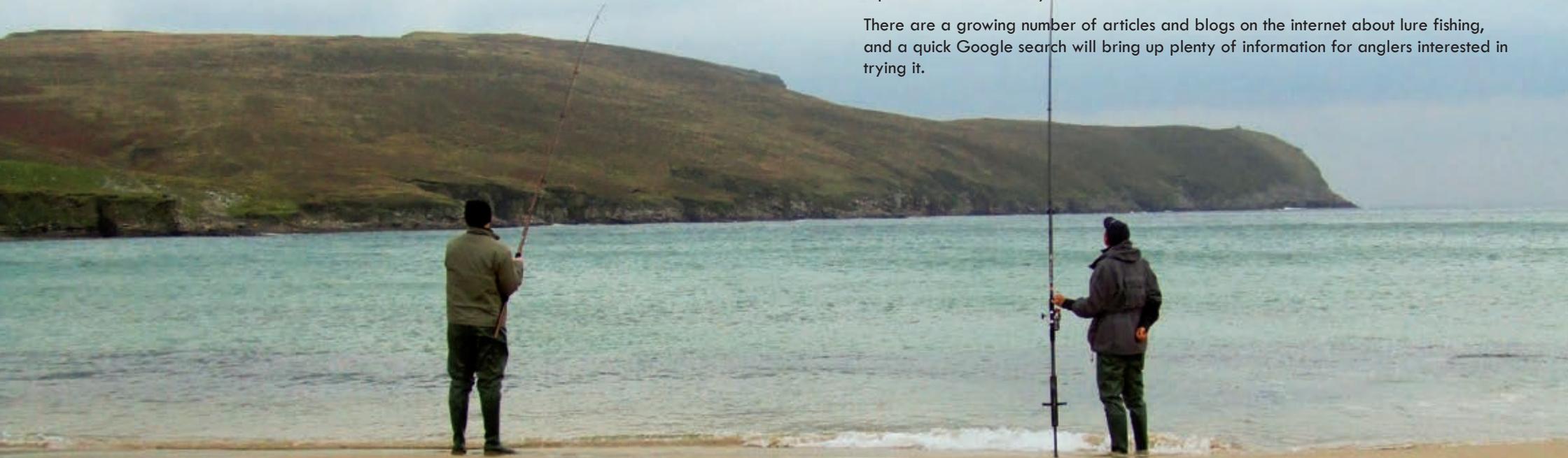


Soft Plastic Lures

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.



## 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](http://www.fishinginireland.info/guides/index.htm)

## 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](http://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.



A close-up photograph of a fishing rod and reel lying on a rocky shore. The rod is blue and black, with a textured grip. The reel is silver and blue, with a green spool. The background shows dark rocks and seaweed.

## 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.

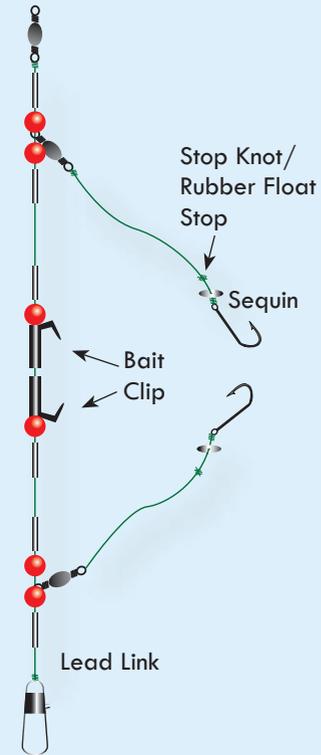
Fishing for ray, dogfish and bull huss usually requires a longer cast into deeper water, and as these fish mainly hunt by scent, the bait should not move around much, so that fish can follow the scent trail to the bait. A 4-6oz grip lead is best in this situation, with the wires engaged so that the bait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

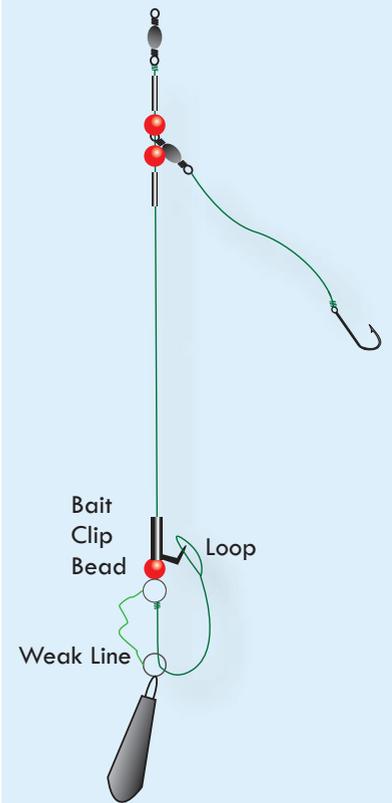
### 1 Up 1 Down Rig



 Bead    
  Crimp    
  Swivel

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



 Bead    
  Crimp    
  Swivel

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.

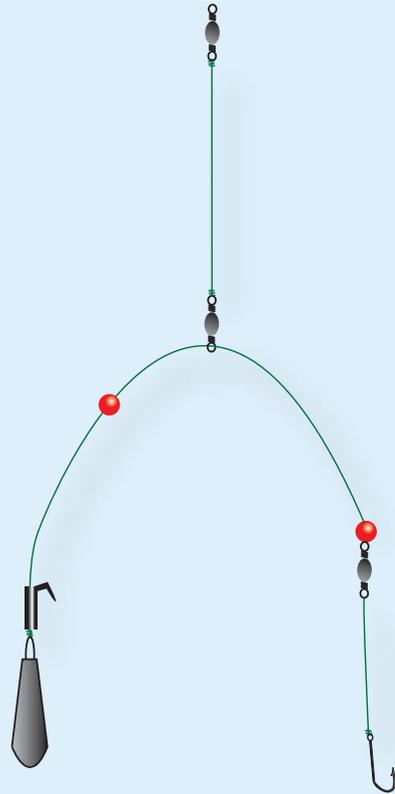
## Traces - Shore Rigs

### 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.

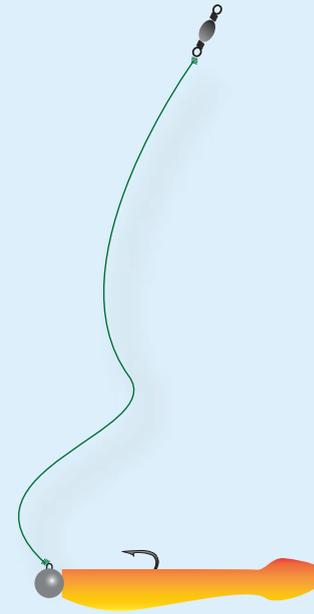
### Pulley Rig



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.

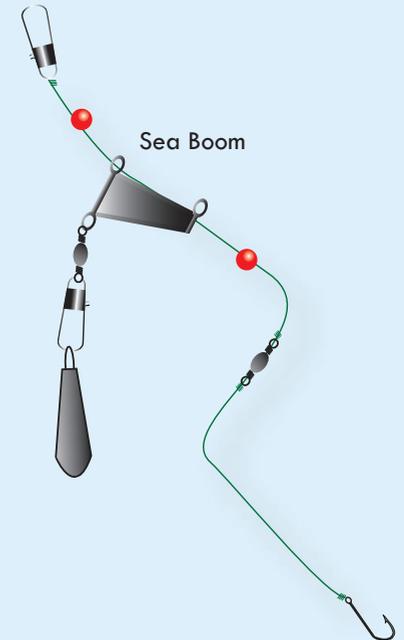
## Traces - Boat Rigs

### 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.

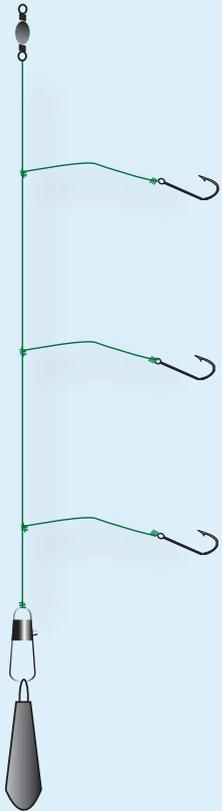
### The Running Leger



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.

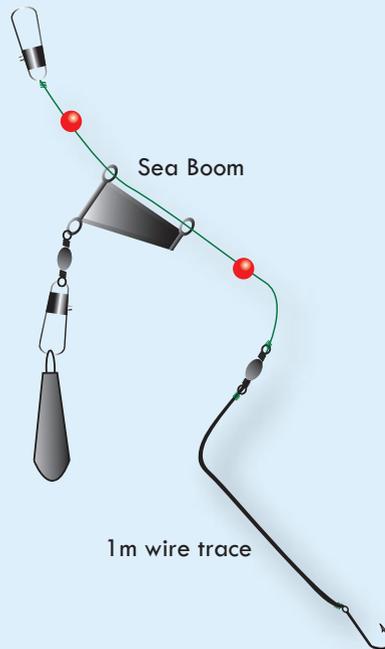
## Traces - Boat Rigs

### 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.

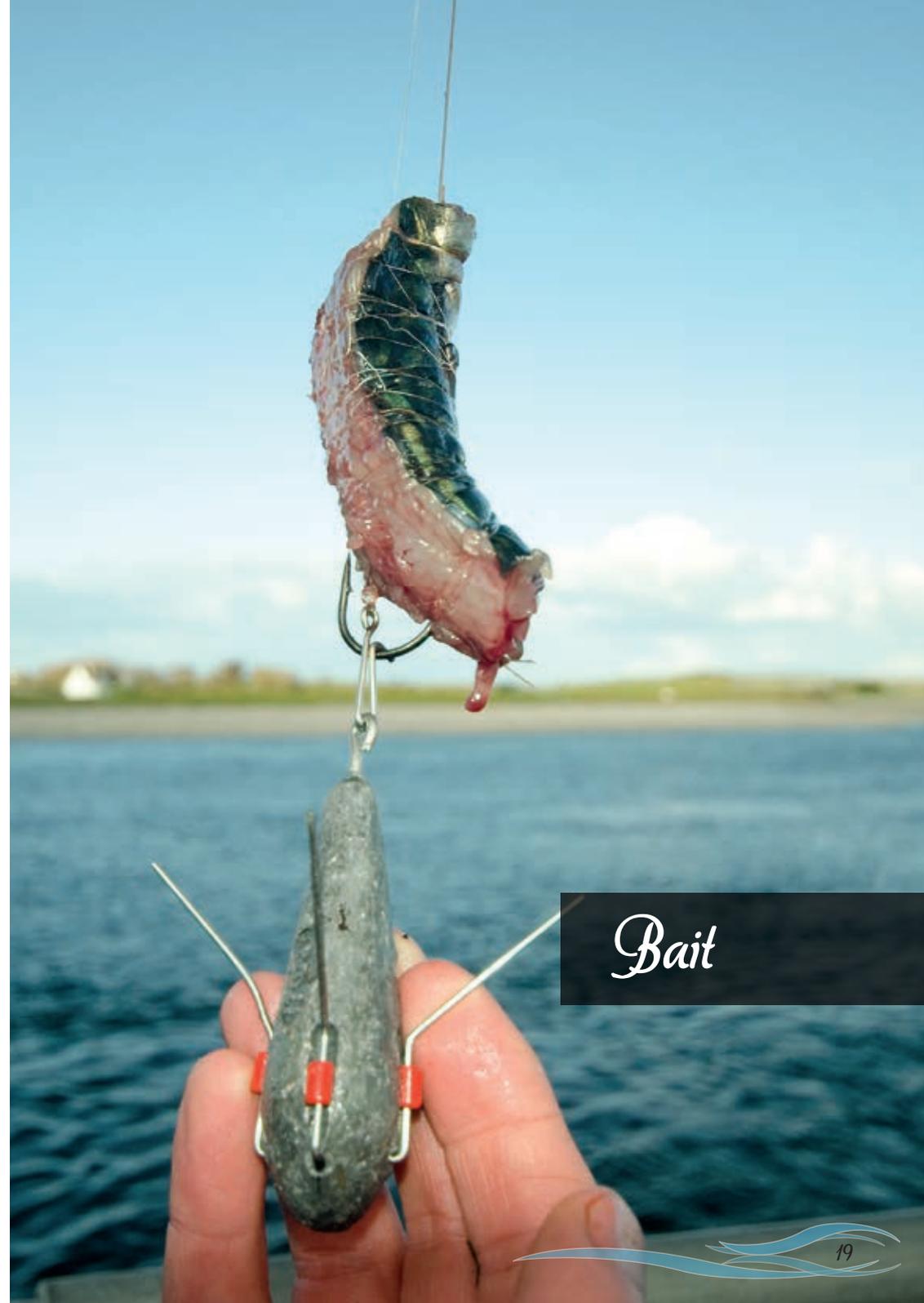
### Conger and Tope Trace



 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).



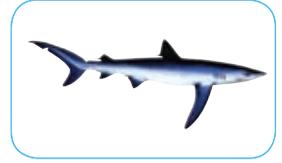
### 8 Tope (*Galeorhinus galeus*)

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 kilometers 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).



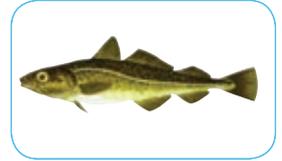
### 10 Pollack (*Pollachius pollachius*)

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 rubby-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.



# Map 1

Clew Bay & Achill



Blacksod



Gweesalia

Tullaghan Bay

Saddle Hd.

Doogort

Keel Lough

Dooagh

Keel

Inishbiggle

Achill Hd.

12

11

10

9

Dooega Head

Achill Sound

8

Cloghmore

Achillbeg Is.

6

Corraun

Mulranney

5

CLEW BAY

1

2

3

4

Newport

Clare Is.

## The Region

The area covered by this guide extends from Pigeon Point, north west of Westport, on Clew Bay, Co. Mayo to Mullaghmore Head on the south western shore of Donegal Bay. The area contains a multi-faceted shoreline featuring some of Ireland's highest and most awe inspiring sea cliffs at Achill Island and Downpatrick Head, many picturesque bays and backwaters such as Broadhaven, Killala and Sligo Bays and some of the finest beaches and surf strands in the entire country such as those at Keel, Cross, Enniscrone and Rosses Point. The north western corner of the region is arguably the nearest part of Ireland to the edge of the Continental Shelf and the whole area boasts possibly the widest range of marine species to be found anywhere in the country. Boat fishing has been carried out in the region for over 100 years and shore fishing, of a sort, for food rather than sport, probably preceded that.

## Map 1: Northern Clew Bay and Achill Island

It is said that Clew Bay has 365 islands, one for every day of the year. This complex system of islands, reefs and rocks provides shelter in even the most severe weather conditions. The notorious sixteenth century clan chief, sea trader, and pirate Grace O'Malley or Granuaile (circa 1530 to 1603) used Clew Bay as her centre of operations. There she maintained an abbey at Murrisk, at the foot of Ireland's holy mountain Croagh Patrick, and fortified houses overlooking the harbour on Clare Island and at Rockfleet near Newport.

### Rossmoney (1) 53.853299, -9.583107

Rossmoney is located north west of Westport and 4.8km west of the N59. A walk of about 180m to the right of the pier leads to a point. A 65 to 90m cast, avoiding the rock outcrops, is required to put bait among fish. Dogfish, bull huss, ray and conger are available there and one hour either side of low water is the best period. To the south of Newport, and west of the N59, are many locations among the points from where productive fishing can take place. Dogfish and bull huss are available at all locations, but small pollack turn up at Rosnakilly, flounder at Ross Point.

### Rossnarubble (2) (53.86541, -9.5915)

Rossnarubble 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 Rossnarubble is one of the most 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!



### Newport (3) 53.885131, -9.556199

There is float fishing for mullet, from the end of the quay in Newport and pre baiting for a couple of days should encourage fish to feed. Spinning occasionally turns up sea trout while flounders take crab or worm baits. The best fishing is usually found on the first two hours of the flood tide.

*A fully certified charter boat operates for most of the year from either Newport Quay or Roigh Pier and provides excellent inshore fishing for ray, tope, huss, dogfish and common skate. All skate caught on rod and line in this area are tagged and released under the IFI Marine Sportfish Tagging Programme. Since the inception of the programme, in 1980, there has been a marked increase in the number of common skate being captured. One notable recapture was a fish which had originally been tagged in October 1985 and which turned up in exactly the same spot some 9 years later, in 1994! Skate generally average around the 150lbs (68kgs) but many fish of over this weight are caught annually.*

### Lough Furnace (4) 53.900874, -9.574033

Mullet, to over the specimen weight of 5lbs (2.27kg), are taken fairly regularly at the outflow from Lough Furnace. Sweet corn or bread flake are generally the most successful float fished or free lined baits, while fly fishing is growing in popularity and presents

an even greater sporting challenge. The majority of specimen fish have been taken in the month of August. Lough Furnace and its tributaries are under the management of the Marine Institute, Furnace, Newport and permission to fish should be sought before commencing.

Where the Owengarve River crosses the beach at **Rossturk (A) 53.898851, -9.707243** lugworm, clam and some white ragworm can be dug on the channel banks at low tide.

#### **Mullranny (5) 53.897587, -9.777229**

There is a tidal slipway beside the Pier at Mullranny, which dries at low water. Boat fishing in the Bay offers exceptional sport at times for ray and occasional common skate while to the west, the mixed ground offshore from the Corraun Peninsula provides a wide range of species, including pollack, codling, coalfish, wrasse, dabs and gurnard. Pier fishing at high water is for wrasse, coalfish, dogfish and dabs and occasional triggerfish and sea trout, while on a flooding tide the beach yields dabs, dogfish, turbot and occasional ray and bass. Sandeel and mackerel strip are the best baits at Mullranny.

Sandeel can be dug on the bank of the channel **(B) 53.902872, -9.778182** at low tide.



#### **Coast Road, Mullranny to Corraun (6) 53.870040, -9.926002 to 53.869332, -9.851329**

There are several rock-fishing stations below the 5km long coast road between Mullranny and Corraun. The ground is very mixed, ranging from shallow weed covered rock, through deep kelp fringed gullies to sandy hollows and depressions. Spinning in deep water accounts for pollack and mackerel, while bottom fishing produces wrasse, conger, rockling, dogfish, bull huss and ray.

**At Corraun (C) 53.881324, -9.938520** lugworm can be dug in the west-facing bay opposite Cloghmore.

*In summer, at least one of the Newport vessels operates from Corraun Quay offering superb species fishing in and around Deacy's Rock, Achillbeg and along the southern shore of Achill Island. Species available here include cod, haddock, whiting, dab, plaice, turbot, ray, pollack, coalfish, ling, cuckoo and ballan wrasse, all the gurnards etc.*

*Achill is the largest island off the Irish coast, and is connected to the mainland by a road bridge which carries the R130 across Achill Sound. The island is roughly triangular in shape and 25km across. There is a long tradition of boat angling and big fish catches, dating back to the early 1900's. Some of the most significant, pioneering research of deep water, big game fishing took place there, during this period. In 1932 Dr. O'Donel-Brown took a porbeagle shark of 305lbs (165.5kg), off Keem Bay, which at the time was not only an Irish record but also the biggest porbeagle shark ever taken on rod and line in European waters. Then, in 1959, Mr. J. McMonagle caught a record blue shark of 206 lbs (93.4kg) off Achill Head. In 1973, a magnificent Irish and European Record tub gurnard of 12.25lbs (5.67kg) was boated at Bulls mouth by Robert Seaman and, in 2002, a huge electric ray of 88lbs (40kg) was caught by Shay Boylan while boat fishing in shallow water on the southern shore. Many other fine fish have been taken in the area over the years including ling to 28.5lbs (12.93kg), pollack to 14.25lbs (6.4kg), pouting to 3.25lbs (1.47kg), red bream to 5.75lbs (2.61kg) and common skate to 173lbs (78.47kg).*

#### **Cloghmore (7) 53.874943, -9.948218**

Fast tides and dangerous currents in Achill Sound mean fishing can be very difficult and possibly dangerous on springs. As a result bottom fishing from the pier at Cloghmore is almost impossible except on slack water at low or high tide when dogfish, dabs and flounder are available. Mackerel occasionally shoal in the fast water just offshore, between the Castle and pier and spinning or jigging small Sabiki type feathers can prove very productive.

#### **Atlantic Drive (8) 53.883955-9.974484 to 53.898978, -9.997400**

The 6.5km stretch of coastline between Cloghmore and Doega, known as Atlantic Drive is one of the most awe-inspiring pieces of scenery on the entire west coast. The road, which is exposed to the prevailing elements, clings to the top of high sea cliffs and doubles back on itself in several places as it corkscrews across the precipitous hillside.

About halfway along the drive, a small track leads down to a number of rock outcrops. Float fishing and spinning there will produce pollack, coalfish, wrasse and occasional garfish. Bottom fishing will account for dogfish, rockling, conger and bull huss. The ground is generally rocky and very weedy, making tackle losses almost unavoidable. The use of light line “rotten bottom” between the main line and lead will help reduce the loss.

*There are probably more angling vantage points waiting to be discovered, particularly on the eastern side of Dooega Head. The potential for really exciting shore angling exists there and the angler who is prepared to put in time and effort seeking it out should be well rewarded. Great care and common sense should be exercised at all times due to the exposed nature of the area. Visitors are advised not to approach the shoreline in heavy sea swells, or in rain, as the rocks become treacherous in these conditions and a slip could prove fatal. Even in dry conditions, it is recommended that footwear with good grip should be worn.*

#### **Keel Strand (9) 53.969517, -10.064691**

Just before the village of Keel, there is a turn off the R319, which leads past a caravan park and golf course down to Keel Strand. During daylight, in summer, there are virtually no fishing opportunities on this very popular blue flag beach. Most of the possibilities, therefore, exist either at night or in spring or autumn when the hordes of holidaymakers are absent. For best results, strong surf is generally required, particularly at the outflow of Gallagher’s Stream where turbot, dab, flounder, plaice, dogfish and occasional ray can be caught. At times, this beach also produces quality fishing for sea trout and fish to over 14lbs (6.34kg) have been taken there on sandeel baits.

#### **Purteen (10) 53.964579,-10.099360**

About halfway between the villages of Keel and Dooagh, a narrow road runs down to the little harbour of Purteen from where most of the boat fishing in the area takes place, and where much of the island’s angling tradition is centred. A registered sea angling boat normally operates from there during the summer months, fishing for the forty or so species that have been recorded from marks such as the Mweelaun Rocks, Moyteoge Point, Achill Head and the Bills Rocks. There is a slipway in the harbour which is usable for most of the tide and where small boats can be safely launched. There is also ample parking space for tow vehicles and trailers to the west of the pier. The harbour holds good shoals of big mullet in summer with fish to over 6lbs (2.72kg) possible on bread flake. From the outer wall, conger to over 50lbs (22.68kg), and ballan wrasse to over 6lbs (2.72kg) have been caught. Those anglers who enjoy ‘scratching’ for mini species, will find corkwing wrasse, tompot blenny, shanny, small whiting and rockling along the west wall of the harbour.

#### **Rusheen Cove (11) 53.969820, -10.136961**

As the R319 runs west of Dooagh it begins to climb around the side of Croaghaun Mountain. Just before the turn off to Lough Acorrymore there is a track on the other side



of the road, which leads down the hillside to the sheltered Rusheen Cove. Spinning from the rocks produces pollack to over 5lbs (2.27kg) and mackerel. Float fished worm baits attract coalfish to 2lbs (.91kg) and wrasse to 4lbs (1.8kg) while bottom baits should catch dogfish to 2lbs (.91kg) and conger to 15lb (6.8kg).

#### **Keem Bay (12) 53.968760, -10.189832**

Where the R319 reaches its highest point, there is a stunning view over Keem Bay many hundreds of feet below. Steep, heather covered mountain slopes, plunge down to the crescent of golden sand lapped by aquamarine water of crystalline quality. This is, without doubt, the most beautiful beach on the island and, despite being quite small - it is just over 0.5km long at low tide - it has been awarded a blue flag. Like all the other local beaches, Keem can get very crowded during the months of June, July and August but, on its day, is also capable of providing some of the best beach fishing in County Mayo. It was once thought that autumn was the best time to fish on Keem Strand but, as more anglers "discovered" it, so opinions seemed to change and the months of April and May came into favour. Whatever the preference, just being there to enjoy the magnificent scenery satisfies the majority of anglers. To catch fish, a flooding tide is the best time. Distance casting, 140m +, with lugworm, ragworm, sandeels and squid strip will produce codling, dogfish and plaice to 3lbs (1.36kg), dab to 1.25lbs (.57kgs) and occasional thornback ray to 6lbs (2.76kg). Fishing close to the rock, on the western side, yields wrasse to 4lbs (1.81kg) and coalfish to 2lbs (.91kg). Baits fished within the 35m range will yield small turbot and flounder to 2lb (.91kg). Keem Strand has also the ability to turn up unexpected species with homelyn ray, black sole and triggerfish also recorded. Small boat fishing in the bay has yielded trigger fish, red, grey and tub gurnard, dabs, codling and pollack.

#### **Doogort (13) 54.012434, -10.024473**

Situated on the northern shore of Achill is Doogort which is yet another blue flag beach and is also a popular holiday location in summer. To the north west of the beach, a quay and tidal slipway are located and, from there, small boats can be launched to fish the mainly shallow, sandy grounds on the southern side of Blacksod Bay, and east to Bulls mouth, for ray (homelyn and thornback), tope, spurdog, dogfish, bull huss, gurnard and dabs. Access to the quay is very restricted and care should be taken when parking trailers to avoid causing an obstruction. The ground off the end of the quay is mainly rock and weed falling off to sand at about 55m. This mixed sea bed offers a wide range of species to try for and although there are few big fish to be caught, there is more than enough action to satisfy even the most discerning angler. Species available include ballan and corkwing wrasse, dab, flounder, plaice, dogfish, pollack, coalfish and mackerel.

At **Bunacurry (D) 53.952146, -9.923407** soft and peeler crab can be collected below the seaweed at low tide; mussel can also be gathered from the rock outcrops while lugworm can be dug on the mudflats.

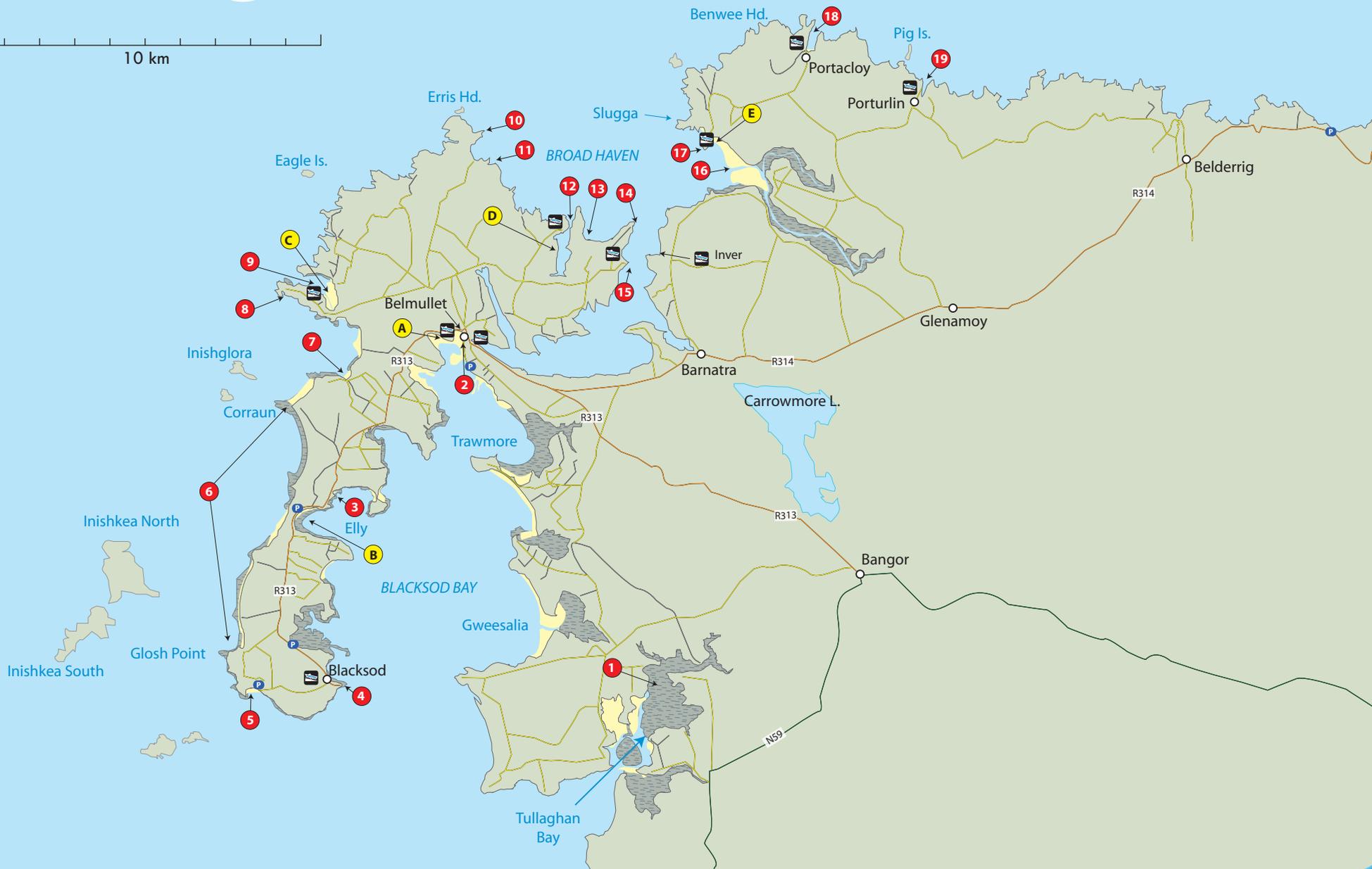
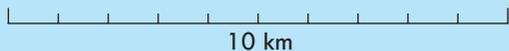
**Tides at Inishraher Island (Clew Bay) are +6.00 hrs on Dublin times.**



*There are other beach and rock marks on Achill Island, particularly on the northern side, which appear to offer considerable fishing opportunities but difficulties with access between Saddle Head and Slievemore have deterred many anglers over the years. There are, however, ways to get down to the deepwater shoreline, all of which involve long, sometimes, arduous walks with steep descents. These venues are not for the faint hearted but a handful of anglers are now investigating the possibilities in the area and who knows what they will uncover?*

# Map 2

Belmullet & Erris



## Map 2: Belmullet and the Erris Region

### Tullaghan (1) 54.101483,-9.866079

On the eastern shores of Blacksod Bay (to the southeast of Belmullet) there are several sandy estuaries where flounder, dogfish, sea trout, turbot and bass have all been recorded, but shore fishing is seldom practised and little is known of the fishing locally. The largest of these estuaries is at Tullaghan where the Owenmore River enters the sea. The two smaller bays to the north at Gweesalia and Trawmore are also worthy of note. There are obvious opportunities there for further exploration. On a cautionary note, most of the eastern inshore waters are home to large numbers of lesser weever (*Trachinus vipera*) which can inflict a nasty sting, occasionally leading to hospitalisation. Caution should, therefore, be exercised when handling these fish.

### Belmullet (2) 54.225754, -9.988424

The town of Belmullet, which is almost as far west as one can go in Ireland, lies between the large bays of Blacksod to the south and Broadhaven to the north. The town is the capital of the Barony of Erris and is regarded by many anglers as offering the greatest variety of sea fish anywhere in Ireland. This is borne out by the fact that over 45 species have been recorded there. Many Irish Records were established in the area but two that remain are James Prescott's red gurnard of 3lbs 9.5ozs (1.63kg), in 1968, and Frank Brogan's 156lb (70.76kgs) halibut taken in 1972. Local records show something of the quality of fishing available and include coalfish to 22.25lbs (10.09kgs), dab to 1.72lbs (.780kgs), grey gurnard to 2.24lbs (1.02kg), haddock to 7.90lbs (3.58kgs), mackerel to 2.90lbs (1.31kgs), monkfish to 51lbs (23.13kgs), tope to 52lbs (23.59kgs), torsk to 6.28lbs (2.85kgs), turbot to 32.50lbs (14.74kgs), whiting to 3.80lbs (1.72kgs) and cuckoo wrasse to 1.45lbs (.660kg). Virtually all of these species were taken while boat fishing, but shore fishing in the area is also of a high standard and very varied.

Blacksod and Broadhaven Bays are connected by a narrow tidal channel in the town and grey mullet to over 6lbs (2.7kg) have been taken there by freelining, floatfishing and on fly fishing equipment. Small rockling and flounder to over 2lbs (.907kg) are also known to inhabit the area.

Below the old pump house, on the Blacksod Road (R313), in Belmullet, and south to the creamery below **Carne (A) 54.224550,-10.006878**, lugworm and clam are plentiful and high enough on the beach to allow digging to take place after the first two hours of an ebbing tide.

### Gaisce (3) 54.171252, -10.067517

Further south on the R313 a narrow bridge crosses the main outflow from Leam Lough. This area of water, which is known locally as the Gaisce is a narrow saltwater channel, which runs from the sea into Leam Lough. Loosely translated, "Gaisce" means 'active' or 'fast'. This is an apt description because the stream rushes in a torrent through the narrows. Several deep holes have formed, which hold mullet, sea trout, flounder, immature pollack, coalfish, ballan wrasse and corkwing wrasse. Fishing from the bridge or along the



southern side of the channel affords most comfortable access. Care should be exercised, however, as this road can carry surprisingly heavy volumes of traffic at times.

The beach at **Elly Bay (B) 54.159569, -10.089067** is very popular with swimmers and is too shallow to provide any worthwhile opportunities for shore angling but, just below the car park, is an excellent bait digging area for lugworm and small white ragworm. Sandeel will occasionally show up when digging in summer along the low tide line.

### Blacksod (4) 54.099344, -10.059664

Small boats can be launched from the slipway at Blacksod where registered charter boats are also available on a full time basis, offering sheltered fishing in Blacksod Bay for tope, thornback and homelyn ray, bull huss, dab, dogfish and occasional spurdog and monkfish. Fishing is best in the inner portion of the bay from late April to the end of June when the shoals of male tope in the 25lb to 35lb (11.34kg to 15.88kg) range, are running up the main channel, around Claggan Point and into the shallows at the top of the bay. Boat fishing outside the bay, generally doesn't get underway until May when the weather begins to settle.



Some of the better known marks outside the bay lie 8km to the south of Blacksod and off the northern shore of Achill Island. Best known are Annagh Bay, Saddle Head and Achill Head where megrim, tub and red gurnard, trigger fish, pollack, cod, coalfish, ling and blue shark have been recorded. The Black Rock lies 9.3km south west of Blacksod Point and the reefs there can, on their day, produce superb fishing for pollack, ling, coalfish and cod. Fishing on the drift is the tried and tested method using artificial lures such as pirks, redgill eels (black or orange are favourites), jellyworm and flashfoil shads. Luminous lures such as Hoikoi or Devil Rigs, baited with mackerel strip, squid or bunches of worms will add to the variety of fish caught. Before conservation became a byword for sea angling in Ireland, hauls of over 2000lbs (907kg) were a fairly regular occurrence on the Black Rock grounds but now the vast majority of fish caught are returned alive to the water.

Almost 5km off the western side of the peninsula are the islands of Inishkea North and South. The Inishkeas had a thriving fishing community up until 1927 when a tragic fishing accident claimed the lives of ten men. This disaster precipitated calls for the remaining population to be removed from the islands and, very soon after, the Inishkeas were abandoned. There is excellent reef fishing all round the islands and good clean ground fishing for turbot, plaice, dab and ray on the southern side of the north island.

#### Fallmore (5) 54.096198, -10.110696

To the west of Blacksod, is the south facing beach of Fallmore. The beach fishes best when the surf is running and bass, flounder, and sea trout can be taken. During calm spells, particularly at night there are opportunities for ray, dogfish, bull huss and even an occasional tope.

#### Glosh Point to Corraun Point (6) 54.109735, -10.133527 to 54.198851, -10.097564

On the Atlantic side of the Mullet Peninsula, there is a 9.6km stretch of beach interspersed with several rocky outcrops, between Glosh Point and Corraun Point. Fishing along this stretch is for flounder, dab, dogfish, small turbot, occasional ray, sea trout and bass. There are several access points to the beach, one of which is signposted from the R313 opposite Elly Bay. Unfortunately, anglers have to contend with surfers during daylight for most of the summer but night fishing on suitable flood tides should yield rich rewards as sea trout to 9lbs (4.08kgs) and flounder to 2lbs (.91kg) have been taken there.

#### Cross Strand (7) 54.210348, -10.062374

From the R313, in the village of Bingamstown, a signpost indicates the turning for Cross Strand where bottom fishing in the surf accounts for flounder, sea trout, dogfish, turbot and occasional bass, ray and bull huss. The majority of these species appear to be more abundant on the beach after dark, particularly on a flooding tide. Sandeel and mackerel strips are the best bait, by far, on this beach.

#### Annagh Head (8) 54.242159, -10.103410

The 3.2km long, northwest facing Annagh Head is a popular rock angling location situated about 8km west of Belmullet town. Mackerel often shoal close to the Head in summer, and local anglers enjoy spinning for them in the long evenings. Pollack up to 8lbs (3.63kg) will occasionally be taken, giving a very good account of themselves on the light mackerel fishing outfits. Float fishing produces wrasse and coalfish while baits fished on the bottom will find conger, bull huss, rockling and dogfish. The ground all round Annagh is very foul and tackle losses are almost certain; however as distance casting is of no advantage there, old spark plugs attached to the mainline by a paperclip will act perfectly well as disposable sinkers.

Huge sea swells are generated during south or southwest gales and the fishing marks at Annagh become very dangerous. The rocks at Annagh Head should, therefore never be approached in these circumstances. Several lives have been lost there and an angler swept off the rocks in stormy conditions would have virtually no chance of surviving.

#### Frenchport (9) 54.240453, -10.081762

On the northern side of Annagh Head, there is a pier and slipway at Frenchport. From there, small boats can be launched to fish around Inishglora Island to the south and Eagle Island in the north. Over the years, the local sea angling club have organised occasional boat trips from there and recorded excellent catches of ling, whiting, haddock, pollack, wrasse, coalfish, turbot, cod, ray etc. At the time of publishing this guide, there is no charter boat in this area and, as a result, there is little boat angling activity. This is also one of the nearest parts of the Irish coast to the deep water beyond the 50 fathom line

and the possibilities are almost endless, because anything could turn up. If ever a place was crying out for more angling activity, this must be it.

Lugworm can be dug on the beach to the east of the pier in **Frenchport Bay (C)**, **-54.240052, -10.073802** while crab can be collected among the weed-covered boulders below the road. The area of reed bed and marsh at the eastern side of the beach, which surround the outflow from Termoncarragh Lake, is an important breeding ground for several rare species of birds and anglers are requested to bear this in mind when digging bait or walking in the vicinity.

#### **Erris Head (10) 54.300449, -9.984439**

The northern most point of the Mullet Peninsula is Erris Head, which can be reached by taking a 3.2km walk, over the steep hillside to the northwest of the car park at Glenlara. This is one of the most productive and exciting local shore angling marks but requires a fair level of fitness, stout walking shoes with good grip, and a backpack for tackle and food! These are all essentials and great care is required on the steep descent and the return climb is strenuous, requiring both hand and foot holds. Fishing is concentrated mainly on the eastern side of the headland where spinning and float fishing will yield pollack to 9lbs (4.08kgs), ballan wrasse to 4lbs (1.81kg) coalfish and mackerel. Bottom fishing will turn up conger and ling to 10lbs (4.54kg), gurnard, whiting, dab, turbot, dogfish and rockling. Erris Head can be a very dangerous location, even in calm, sunny weather, but the journey should never be attempted in wet conditions or when an onshore wind is pushing waves up onto the rock face. No matter what the weather, fishing there should never be attempted on one's own.

#### **Glenlara (11) 54.290443, -9.978937**

An 800 meter walk to the east of the car park at Glenlara (11) will lead to a single north facing finger of rock. On the western side of the rock, spinning accounts for pollack and mackerel while float fishing will yield wrasse and coalfish. Bottom fishing will produce strap conger to 12lbs (5.44kg), rockling to 1.5lbs (.68kg) and dogfish to 3lbs (1.36kg). A lot of patience and a fair modicum of good luck will also be required to prise fish away from the very foul bottom. The best time to fish there is two hours either side of high water.

#### **Blind Harbour (12) 54.266966, -9.928039**

Spinning at the narrow entrance of the almost land locked Blind Harbour will account for pollack to over 6lbs (2.72kg), mackerel and occasional sea trout on a flooding tide. Bottom fishing over sand from the quay will yield dabs and flounder at high water. The slipway is tidal but small boats can be launched for three hours either side of high water. This is the most convenient launching place for exploring some of the best fishing grounds on Broadhaven Bay and the fish rich waters at Erris Head are less than 6.5km away. A great variety of species have been caught there, including some of the less common ones such as brill, homelyn ray, megrim and John Dory.

To the west of Blind Harbour, a road runs from the Belmullet/ Ballyglass Road for about 1.6km along the shore of the **Harbour Estuary (D) 54.255373, 9.928300**. Below this road, lugworm can be dug, in quantity, while occasional clam and white ragworm can also be taken. Trench digging is the effective method.



#### **Pollacappul Strand (13) 54.263545, -9.918257**

At the end of the road, a short walk over a grassy hillock will lead to the charming Pollacappul Strand. The beach is only 45m long but is blessed with pristine golden sand, washed by a pellucid sea of deep blue. The beach can be fished at any time, day or night, and it is a rare occurrence to find other people there. In bright weather, fishing tends to be slow so night tides are the better option. Flounder and small turbot will be taken close to the beach through low water and on the first few hours of the flood tide. In surf conditions, a sandeel fished into the breakers may tempt a sea trout while distance casting at high water will produce thornback ray, occasional homelyn ray, larger turbot, dabs, plaice and dogfish. Spinning from the rocks to the west of the beach can be excellent for pollack and mackerel, particularly at dusk. The lands surrounding the beach are all privately owned and permission to cross them may be required. Anglers are asked not to block gateways or leave gates open and should only cross fences at styles or designated crossing points.

#### **Ballyglass Lighthouse (14), 54.268344, -9.887987**

At the western entrance to Inner Broadhaven is Ballyglass Lighthouse, which was first switched on in 1855 and is now fully automatic. The beam from the lighthouse shows white to seaward and red to the west to steer vessels clear of sunken rocks on the western side of the point. From the rocks below the lighthouse wall, conger to 20lbs (9.10kg), wrasse to 4lbs (1.81kg), pollack to 6lbs (2.72kg), mackerel, coalfish and pouting can all be taken in summer. Care should be taken on the northern side of the lighthouse as the only path is very narrow and runs along the top of a deep ravine. This area is dangerous in easterly winds over force five as waves will be pushed onto the rock in these conditions.

#### **Ballyglass Pier (15) 54.254038, -9.891720**

About 1.6km south of the Lighthouse is Ballyglass Pier which is the main harbour and landing facility on the Mullet Peninsula and base for a state of the art lifeboat station and lifeboat. There are two slipways from which small boats can be launched to fish Inner Broadhaven Bay, nearby Rossport Bay and up to 8km north, where the productive and little fished Kidd Island grounds have much to offer. Species to be expected include ray, turbot, plaice, dabs, red, grey and tub gurnard over sand while pollack, coalfish, wrasse, ling and conger can be taken over rock and cod, pouting, megrim, haddock and whiting over mixed ground. A large number of species have also been recorded from the pier by shore anglers. Casting from the pier head, over sand will produce flounder, plaice, dab, turbot, ray, codling, whiting and dogfish. Fishing tight to the pillars of the pier, with large baits, will attract conger to 20lbs (9.07kg), while grey mullet to over the specimen weight of 5lbs (2.27kg) have been taken on free-lined pieces of mackerel or bread. Float fishing with small baits attracts an array of mini species such as poor cod, corkwing wrasse and tompot blenny.

#### **Rossport Bay (16) 54.286974, -9.810461**

About 5.5km north of Barnatra, on the R314, the estuaries of the Glenamoy and the much smaller Gweedaney Rivers come together in Rossport Bay. From the pier in Rossport, or from the sandbanks opposite, spinning with long, silver eel-like lures (Jensen, Tobys, German sprat etc) will attract sea trout and occasional bass. Casting a plug across the tide and slowly retrieving is also an extremely effective way of taking bass from two hours after low water to high tide. Flounders are also available on sandeel or lugworm baits fished on the bottom. As much of the fishing in Rossport Bay necessitates standing in water, which is often more than knee deep, and involves the crossing of channels from bank to bank, chest waders are essential.

#### **Rinroe Point (17) 54.296736, -9.845200**

At Rinroe Point and the beach immediately to the north, the last hour of an ebb tide and the first two hours of the flood are the key periods for spinning and bottom fishing. Sea trout, bass and flounder are the main quarry.

To the east of the **Rinroe Pier (E)**, lugworm and sandeel can be dug. Peeler crab can be collected, in springtime, from below the weed and around the rocks.

#### **Portacloy Bay (18) 54.332441,-9.782559**

Portacloy is, without doubt, the top shore angling mark in the area. Fishing is carried out on the western side of the bay along the 800m stretch from the piers and steep shore to the point. Bottom fishing and spinning has produced an astonishing 16 species including ray, turbot, plaice, dab, flounder, coalfish, codling, pollack, red gurnard, dogfish, ballan wrasse and mackerel. At the point, fish can be taken from the start of the flood but the piers see very little action until about two hours before high water when fish seem to move into range. This is the consistent pattern of fishing at Portacloy except during periods of heavy rain, or prolonged wet weather, when large amounts of freshwater pour down the hillsides and into the bay. When this occurs, fish cease feeding and it can take several

days of dry conditions before they resume. Portacloy is about 13km to the northwest of Glenamoy on the R314.

#### **Porturlin (19) 54.321142, -9.709128**

The small commercial harbour Porturlin of is about 6.5km to the east of Portacloy and about 9.5km to the north of Glenamoy. The quality of fishing was always highly regarded by anyone who visited Porturlin and there is a long tradition of the local commercial fishermen taking a very keen interest in sport fishing and in catering for anglers. In the past, many successful tournaments were fished from there and up to twenty boats could have been at sea at any given time. However, boats, designed and built for salmon and lobster fishing, could never be deemed ideal for angling and, following new safety regulations, in 2001, the Porturlin fleet could no longer be used. The future of sea angling in this area may lie in small boat fishing. There is a good slipway, which is usable on most tides except low water on extreme spring tides. Fishing is over a wide area between Portacloy and Benwee Head while Pig Island, which is just outside the harbour, and the Stags, which are five pinnacle rocks rising dramatically out of the sea about 2.5km from the nearest land, offer boundless opportunities. With over forty species to fish for, the potential for small boat angling at Porturlin is obvious.

**Tides at Belmullet are + 6 hours on Dublin times.**

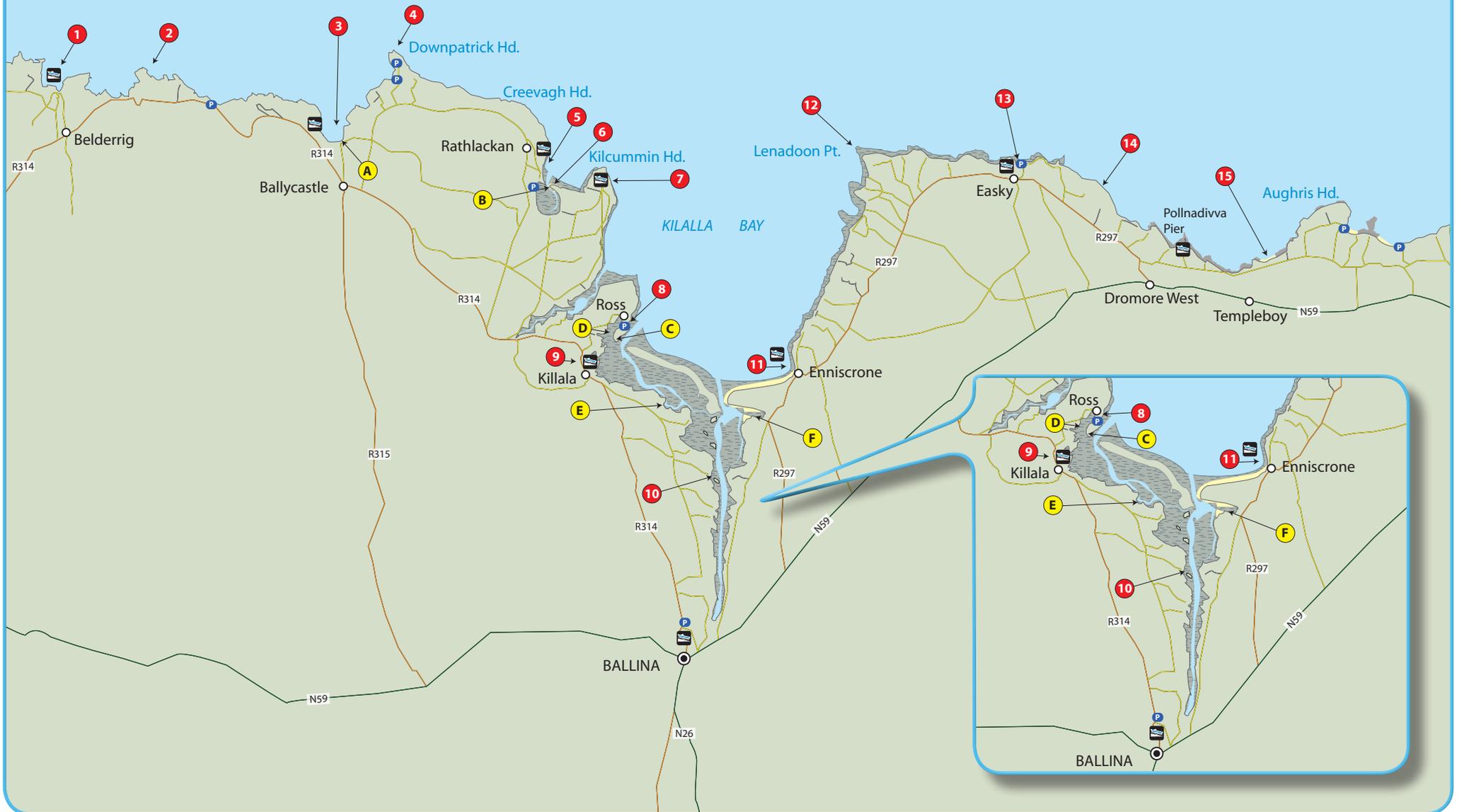


# Map 3

Killala & North Mayo



10 km



## Map 3: Killala Bay and North Mayo

### **Belderrig (1), 54.311491, -9.552705**

From the tiny harbour at Belderrig small boats can be launched to fish the productive waters of the North Mayo coast around Horse Island and Carrigneill. Pollack, coalfish, cod, whiting, all the gurnards, dabs, dogfish and wrasse are the more common species. Hoi Koi lures, Devil Rigs or Black Widow feathers, baited with mackerel, squid strip or lugworm are just some of the successful attractors in the area. On shore, the pier and rocks to the west offer spinning and floatfishing for pollack, coalfish and wrasse while bottom fished baits will turn up conger, dogfish and occasional huss.

### **Port Rocks (2) 54.320804, -9.498582**

About a 1.5km (as the crow flies) north of the R314, and 3km to the west of the Ceide Fields Visitor Centre, is the site of an old promontory fort. Immediately to the north are several accessible rock platforms known as the Port Rocks from which spinning and jigging can be exceptional for pollack, mackerel and garfish. Float fishing yields similar species with the addition of wrasse and coalfish while bottom fishing turns up conger, dogfish and huss. The walk from the road is very much “up hill and down dale” and anglers are advised to travel as lightly as possible. These lands are privately owned and care should be taken by sticking to the sheep tracks and closing gates where necessary.

### **Ballycastle Bay (3) 54.295828, -9.382260**

Just as the R314 veers away from the coast, it passes to the south of Ballycastle Bay. Beach fishing on a flooding tide, to high water, produces flounder, dab, occasional plaice and dogfish. The most productive spots are at the mouth of the Ballinglen River, to the west of the reef, and below the car park. Generally evening tides in autumn offer optimum possibilities, with low water and first two hours of the flood being the best period.

Below the car park **(A) 54.295684, -9.376833** some lugworm are available on the foreshore and, in spring time, crab can be collected in the weed beside the reef.

### **Downpatrick Head (4) 54.326372, -9.382260**

From the main street of Ballycastle village, a signpost shows the way via a narrow country road to the breathtaking cliffs of Downpatrick Head and the adjacent fulmer and kittiwake colony atop the sea stack of Dun Briste. There is excellent fishing here for pollack, mackerel and wrasse but it is a difficult and very dangerous place to fish. What amounts to cliff fishing is practised by some visitors to the area but this requires a strong head for heights and sturdy shock leader, to lift fish up the cliff face from the sea. Caution is very strongly advised in this area and angling should only be attempted in the very best weather conditions and, if high winds or rain are forecast, stay clear. Much safer fishing, which is almost as productive, can be found from the shallower rocks on either side of the headland where distance casting will possibly put baits over sandy ground, for dogfish and flatfish.



### **Lackan Pier (5) 54.289792, -9.250638**

Boats can be launched at Lackan Pier where the slipway dries for about 2 hours at low water on spring tides. Bottom fishing at high water will account for flounder, conger, and dogfish, while spinning yields mackerel and pollack. Float fishing, just over the weed, produces a whole range of species including coalfish, corkwing and ballan wrasse and pouting. There is safe, almost unexploited small boat fishing in Lackan Bay and a good variety of species to aim at. Most of the flatfish family are present and turbot to 6lbs (2.27kg), plaice to 3lbs (1.36kg), dabs to 1lb (.45kg) are most common over sand, where thornback ray to 8lbs (3.63kg) and homelyn ray to 4lbs (1.81kg) are also found. A three-hook ledger rig, employing spoons baited with mackerel and squid strip, works well from a boat slowly drifting over the sandy ground on the bay. Boat fishing off the rocky margins on either side of the bay at Creevagh Head and Kilcummin Head baited feather lures will account for pollack, cod, coalfish, ling and gurnard. Tub gurnard to over the specimen weight of 5lbs (2.27kg) have also been recorded there. Conger and huss will fall to static baits from an anchored boat off Creevagh Head.

As the R314 tracks south east, and just before a sharp bend at Palmerstown Bridge, on the Cloonaghmore River, a narrow road leads north to **Lackan Estuary (B) 54.279709, -9.247956** where lugworms are plentiful on the western bank of the channel. Sandeel can also be obtained here by drawing a large blunt knife or billhook in arcs through the damp sand near the channel mouth. This forces the eels to the surface and speed and dexterity are then required, in order to grab them before they can shoot back into the sand.

#### **Lackan Strand (6) 54.280636, -9.242678**

To the north of the estuary, is Lackan Strand which is backed by dunes containing several ancient burial sites. Immediately below one of these sites, known locally as the "Green Hill", in the western corner, the beach produces excellent spring time fishing for flounder, dabs, plaice and dogfish. Where the Cloonalaghan River crosses the beach is a hotspot for sea trout in spring and autumn with sandeel being the top bait there. From about mid August to the end of September, the main (eastern) stretch of beach produces ray and turbot appear. Bass will also turn up occasionally when the surf is up after a northerly wind.

#### **Kilcummin Head (7) 54.287500, -9.214504**

There are a number of vantage points from which to fish on Kilcummin Head. Best known is a large flat rock formation known locally as 'The Flags' where spinning accounts for pollack, mackerel and coalfish. Floatfishing offers superb sport for wrasse, especially in the numerous weedy gullies. Access is not easy but there is a rough track just north of Kilcummin village.

#### **Ross (8) 54.233343, -9.195793**

About a 1.5km north of Killala, on the R314, there is a turn off which, after some 3.2km, leads to the shore at Ross, on the western side of the Killala Bar. There is a very strong tide run in the channel but, at slack water on high tide, bottom fishing will turn up dogfish, flounder and freshwater eel. Night fishing has also been rewarded with occasional conger to 30lbs (13.6kg). Spinning can be carried out throughout the tide and will often produce sea trout to 4lbs (1.81kg). Plug fishing on a flooding tide has also turned up occasional bass to 5lbs (2.27kg).

In the estuarine backwater, just before the car park on **Rinnaun Point (C) 54.224475, -9.206378** and in the **Estuary (D) 54.226833, -9.212515**, lugworm can be dug in large numbers, although they are mainly small.

#### **Killala (9) 54.217387, -9.213645**

Killala Bay is approximately 11km across at the widest point and offers some of the best general sea fishing on the west coast. Charter vessels have operated successfully from Killala for almost 50 years and up to forty species have been recorded by boat anglers there. Catches include Irish records for John Dory of 7.5lb (3.4kg), by Cleona Walkin, in 1984, and Megrin of just over 4lbs (1.85kg) by Paul Hennigan in 1987. Other fish of note from the area include spurdog of 15.75lbs (7.14kg), flounder of 4.20lb (1.90kg), blonde ray of 26.75lbs (12.13kg) cuckoo ray of 4.70lbs (2.13kg), thornback ray of 25.5lbs (11.57kg) and white skate of 173lbs (78.47kg). Blue shark fishing is popular on the bay in the months of July, August and September and, every year, fish of over 100lbs (45.36kg) are reported.

To the southeast of Killala, the channel dissects the bay as it runs between Bartragh Island and the mainland just west of **Moyne Abbey (E) 54.202284, -9.177125**

From the southern side of this channel, digging at low water, will produce quality lugworm and clam while crab can be gathered in the weed along the rocky margins in spring.

#### **River Moy Estuary (10) 54.177507, -9.139595**

An almost unique type of fishing is practiced from small boats in the River Moy Estuary, which is just north of the town of Ballina. There, sandeel or mackerel strip is freelined or ledged from a drifting boat for sea trout to 4lbs (1.81kg). Fly fishing in the brackish water has also been successfully tried and has gained a faithful following. Occasionally, during summer, large numbers of mackerel chase shoals of sandeel over the bar and up the main river channel. Anything that looks remotely like a sandeel will catch mackerel during these incursions. In fact, when this happens, anglers report mackerel taking bare hooks! Fly fishing for sea trout on the estuary has become increasingly popular in recent years and can provide very lively sport. Other available species in the estuary are flounder, dab and coalfish but little fishing is carried out deliberately for these species. Boats can be launched from the slipway opposite the Crockets Bar and Restaurant at the Quay in Ballina.

Just west of where the shore road meets the R297 road, at **Scurmore (F) 54.199253, -9.116936** lugworm and clam can be dug in the estuary at low tide.

#### **Enniscrone (11) 54.213961, -9.094448**

The popular holiday town of Enniscrone is situated on the R297 about 4.8km from the N59, Ballina-Sligo, road. The main attraction of the area is the spectacular golden sands of Enniscrone Strand which is backed to the south by high dunes, forming a natural setting for one of the top championship golf links in the country. The 4km long beach faces north and high winds from that quarter put up strong surf over its entire length. On these occasions, the water becomes coloured with disturbed sand and fishing is at its best, with dabs, plaice, flounder, turbot, dogfish and sea trout possible. In the autumn, bass can also be expected and the best fish reported, weighed just over 13.75lbs (6.24kg). The beach has occasionally been used as a match venue and has provided top class sport on these occasions. Despite the obvious potential of Enniscrone Strand, it does not receive the attention from anglers that it should. There is virtually no night fishing

activity on the beach and, therefore, the true extent of the available angling has yet to be realised. The pier also provides good sport at times, with the hours of high water, at night, offering best opportunities. Conger to over 20lbs (9.07kg), have been recorded as have thornback ray to 8lbs (3.63kg) and large numbers of dogfish. In daylight, spinning accounts for pollack and mackerel, while float fishing yields wrasse and coalfish. Very little angling takes place on the pier outside the peak holiday season and, like the strand, has probably much more to offer than is currently appreciated. On the other hand, the boat fishing locally is well established and many fine fish have been recorded over the years including cod to 36lbs (16.33kg), bull huss to 19.37lbs (8.79kg), garfish to 2.5lbs (1.13kg), hake to 22.5lbs (10.21kg) and homelyn ray to 6.48lbs (2.9kg). Boats can be launched from the slipway beside the pier on most tides except low water on spring tides. Generally, the marks that are fished from Killala, on the opposite side of the bay, will also attract boats from Enniscrone. A full time charter vessel is based at Enniscrone and can pick up anglers from there or, by arrangement, from Killala.

#### **Lenadoon Point (12) 54.293612, -9.055395**

About 16km north of Enniscrone, at the eastern extremity of the bay is Lenadoon Point which provides wrasse, pollack and coalfish over very rough, weedy ground. Float fishing can be attempted in the period about two hours either side of high water. Spinning can, realistically, only be tried at slack water on high tide. Unfortunately, even at these times, anglers will be very lucky not to forfeit at least one set of terminal tackle. The tackle risks are worth taking, however, as pollack to 8lbs (3.63kg) have been recorded there.

**Tides at Killala Bay are +6.30 hours on Dublin times.**

#### **Easky Pier (13) 54.292122, -8.954898**

Travelling east along the R297, and through the village of Easky, the first turn to the left leads down a narrow road to Easky Pier. Fishing there is best at high tide when wrasse, pollack, coalfish and conger are probable, notably at night in autumn. Like many of the shore fishing venues in this area the ground below water at the quay is extraordinarily rough and tackle losses are almost inevitable.

#### **Carrownabinna (14) 54.280811, -8.901415**

There are numerous shore fishing vantage points to the north east of the R297 between Easky and Dromore West. The rock ledges around Carrownabinna are of particular interest but these most promising positions require considerable walking to reach them. All the expected species, including conger, pollack, coalfish and wrasse are available and, while there appears to be potential for other species, there is little or no angling for them and hard information is not available.

#### **Trawee Strand (15) 54.259409, -8.798761**

Information is also scant regarding Trawee Strand which lies about 2.4km to the north east of Templeboy and the N59. Flatfish and dogfish are fairly common in autumn there, on bottom-fished baits, but there are several instances of monofilament traces being "bitten off" by much bigger fish. These encounters usually take place in late August and September and almost certainly involve tope.

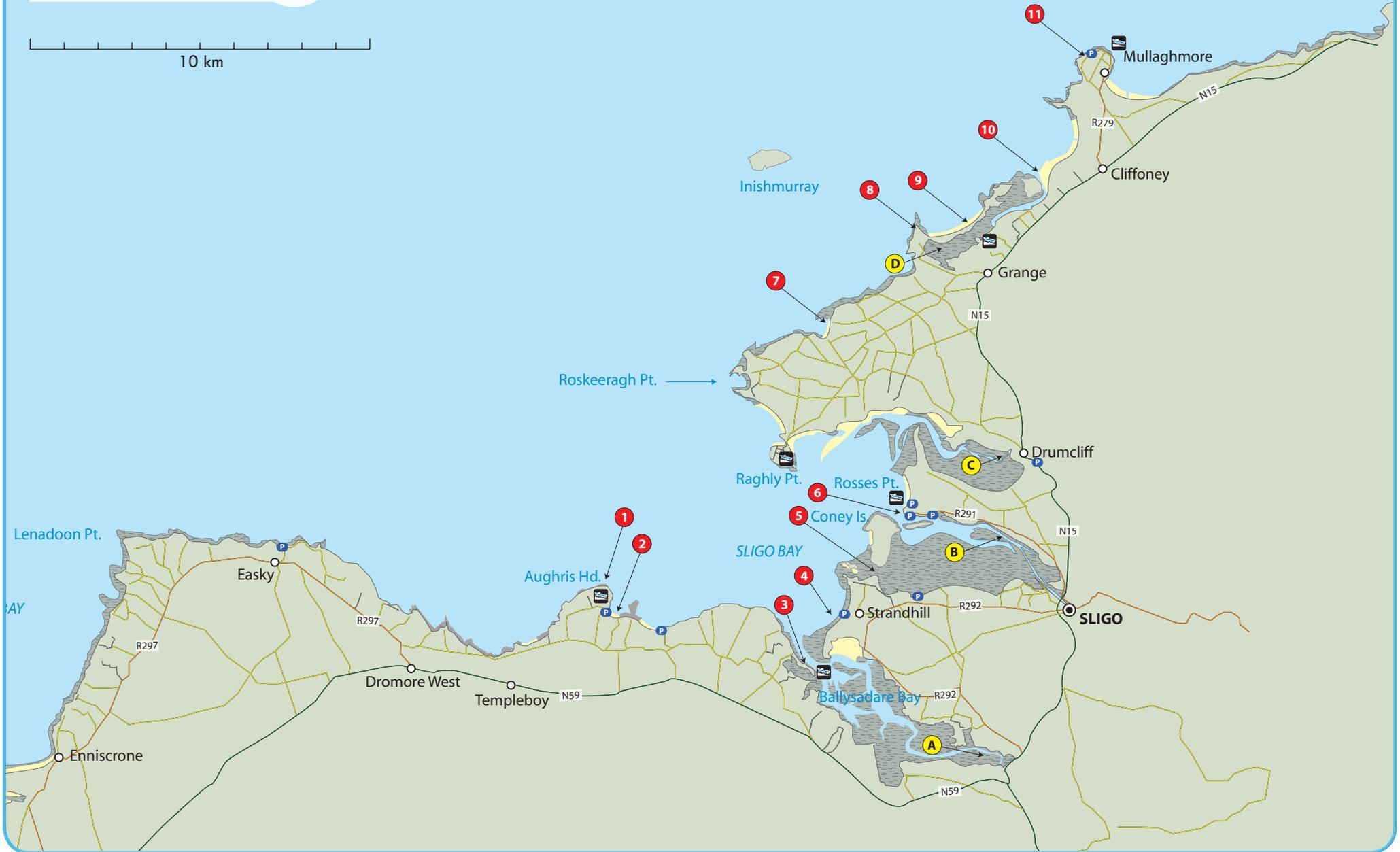


# Map 4

Aughris Head  
To  
Mullaghmore Head



10 km



## Map 4 : Aughris Head to Mullaghmore Head

### Aughris Head (1) 54.279358, -8.755932

The beach to the south of Pollachurry Pier, on the eastern side of Aughris Head provides sport with flounder, dab, dogfish and occasional ray and also experiences an inshore migration of tope during autumn.

### Dunmoran Strand (2) 54.268432, -8.752670

Tope are also possible from the shore at the nearby Dunmoran Strand where flounder and dogfish are fairly common.

### Galleyhouse Strand (3) 54.252439, -8.635812

Galleyhouse Strand fishes best on a flooding tide at the onset of darkness. This is the crucial combination for success as fish move through the narrows into Ballysadare Bay. The hotspot appears to be opposite the sandbar off Mussel Point. Dogfish and ray have been recorded and flounder are very plentiful for much of the year as are mullet in hot weather. Sea trout, bass and mackerel will also be caught in summer, on spinners and plugs, during the first few hours of the flood.

Acres of lugworm beds are located at the head of **Ballysadare Bay (A) 54.217826, -8.510628** just to the north of the town. Care should be exercised when attempting to dig bait there as the mud is very soft in places. An hour's effort will, however, be well rewarded.

### Strandhill (4) 54.269184, -8.610363

At Strandhill beach fishing in autumn should be rewarded with flounder, plaice, dogfish, small turbot and occasional bass. When the surf is up, this is a popular venue for surfers so angling space can be restricted. The long walk south, away from the car park, and the majority of surfers, may pay dividends on these occasions.

### Coney Island (5) 54.285270, -8.590021

From the R292, east of Strandhill, there is a tractor track across Dorrins Strand to Coney Island. Fishing into the channel, on the northern side will yield sea trout, mackerel, bass and flatfish while the western facing beach will produce bass and flounder in surf conditions and occasional ray to distance casters during warm, calm spells in summer. Access to the island is only viable at low water.

*The town of Sligo is regarded as the gateway to the northwest and is at the confluence of a number of major routes. The town is also a good angling base as it is strategically placed at the mid point of the Sligo coastline with shore fishing available to the west and north. There is excellent game fishing for salmon nearby in the Ballysadare River, while the Garavogue River and Lough Gill have salmon and brown trout with the Drumcliffe River and scenic Glencar Lough having salmon and sea trout. There are also several excellent tackle shops in the town.*

Just north of the major junction of the N4, N15 and N16, the R291 veers away in a westerly direction along the north shore of **Sligo Harbour (B) 54.290280, -8.496037**. About halfway between the junction and Rosses Point are several access places to the foreshore where lugworm can be easily dug.

### Rosses Point (6) 54.306309, -8.574958

There are strong currents at Rosses Point but spinning or plug fishing, on a flood tide, between there and Deadmans Point, to the west, will produce sea trout, mackerel and occasional bass. As the tide reaches high water, the current slackens allowing baits to be fished on the bottom for between 45 to 70 minutes. This can be a very exciting time to fish there because dogfish, bull huss, ray and tope are all possible. In most seasons, one or two registered charter boats operate from Rosses Point and they experience very consistent fishing on Sligo Bay for tope, ray, spurdog, dogfish and occasional large skate.

*The Turbot Bank is approximately eight fathoms (14.63 metres) deep and lies to the north west of the mouth of Ballysadare Bay and provides sport with turbot and thornback ray to over 10lbs (4.54kg) and blonde ray to over 15lbs (6.80kg). Another well-known mark is 'the Ledge' which lies about 6.5km west of Coney Island. It is a large, elongated reef lying in a north-south plane, covered by about 15 fathoms (27.43 metres) with several pinnacles reaching up to 5 fathoms (9.14 metres) below the surface. This is a superb pollack fishing area with fish to over 10lbs (4.54kg) regularly taken. Jellyworms, shads and redgills all work well when fished on long flowing traces. Ling, conger, tope and bull huss have also been taken in the vicinity while the area south of 'Wheat Rock' produces common skate to over 150lbs (68kg). There are great opportunities locally for the small boat angler and as this niche of saltwater angling increases in popularity so the fishing on Sligo Bay will be opened up to a wider public.*



**Tides at Sligo are + 5h 50m on Dublin times.**

Below the majestic ramparts of Ben Bulbin Mountain, which rises for over 1,600 feet (500m) above the flat Sligo countryside, the Drumcliff River winds its way across the estuary to **Drumcliff Bay (C) 54.327436, -8.511400**. South of the village of Carney, about a mile west of the N15, on the northern shore, lugworm and clam are plentiful at low tide and can be dug on the banks of the river channel.

**Cloonagh Bay (7) 54.372109, -8.622379**

Some 6km north west of Carney is Cloonagh Bay where pollack can be taken while spinning from the rocks on the southern shore and flatfish and dogfish over sand on the northern shore.

**Streedagh Point (8) 54.409640, -8.568134**

Five kilometres to the north east is Streedagh Point, which consists mainly of large boulders and can only be safely approached for two hours either side of low water. On the northern side of the point, there is excellent spinning for big pollack with fish to over 8lbs (3.73kg) recorded. Float fishing close to the rock turns up ballan and corkwing wrasse in good numbers. Small coalfish will also fall to float fished baits. Dogfish, huss and conger will fall to bottom baits but "rotten bottom" links should be used on leads as the ground is very weedy and rough.



**Streedagh Strand (9) 54.409240, -8.537364**

Approximately 3.2km west of the village of Grange, on the N15, is Streedagh Strand. While this is possibly one of the most picturesque beaches on the western coastline, it was the scene for one of the most horrific maritime disasters in Irish history. On the 25th September 1588, three Spanish armada ships, 'La Lavia', 'La Julianna', and 'Santa Maria Vision' were driven ashore in a fierce storm and wrecked on the beach, with the loss of up to 1,100 lives. There is a memorial recalling the incident in the village. In late summer and autumn, the beach is an excellent fishing location for flounder, plaice, dab, dogfish and occasional ray. The best fishing there is experienced on a flooding tide at dusk.

The estuary known as **Milkhaven (D) 54.400048, -8.550282**, which drains the Grange River, runs behind Streedagh in a north easterly direction. The southern end is a good bait digging area, where lugworm, clam and white ragworm are plentiful.

**Trawalua Strand (10) 54.426121, -8.489513**

Mullet, flounder and sea trout are common in the channel, particularly where it enters the sea between Dernish Island and Trawalua Strand. Free lining sandeel can be very effective for sea trout while casting worm and crab baits into the surf will yield plaice, flounder and the odd bass.

**Mullaghmore Head (11) 54.471260, -8.462906**

Mullaghmore Head, which lies almost 4.8km due west of the village of Cliffoney has several rock fishing sites where pollack, mackerel, conger and wrasse can be caught. The best known spot on the Head is probably Darby's Hole where specimen wrasse to 5lbs (2.27kg) have been taken. The rocks here can be dangerous in wet conditions or in big sea swells. Anglers are advised to take great care at all times.

**Tides at Mullaghmore Head are +6 hours on Dublin times.**

### List of Record Fish from Clew Bay - Mullaghmore

Species	lbs	ozs	kg	Place of capture	Date Of Capture	Name
Bass	13	12.75	6.26	Enniscrone	9/7/1994	Kieran Kilcawley
Black Sole	2	4.875	1.05	Achill Island	6/15/1977	Roy Howarth
Coalfish	22	4	10.09	Belmullet	6/30/1969	Thomas Walsh
Cod	36	0	16.33	Enniscrone	7/17/1975	J. V. Hattertn
Conger Eel	52	0	23.59	Purteen Pier	7/26/1962	Stanley Swallow
Dab			0.78	Belmullet	7/27/1986	Michael Kearney
Dogfish - Greater Spotted	19	6	8.79	Enniscrone	9/10/1976	Thomas Lyons
Dogfish - Lesser Spotted			1.74	Achill Island	7/24/1990	Brian Buckley
Dogfish - Spur	15	12	7.14	Killala Bay	8/7/1967	John Rowe
Flounder			1.56	Lacken	10/17/1999	Desmond Boyle
Garfish (B. bellone)	2	8	1.13	Enniscrone	9/22/1975	Berger Werner
Gurnard - Grey			1.02	Belmullet	7/2/1991	Dominick Cassidy
Gurnard - Red	3	9.5	1.63	Broadhaven Bay	7/17/1968	James Prescott
Gurnard - Tub*	12	3.5	5.54	Bullsmouth	8/8/1973	Robert J. Seaman
Haddock	7	15	3.60	Belmullet	5/31/1975	T. Doyle
Halibut	156	0	70.76	Belmullet	7/23/1972	Frank Brogan
John Dory	7	8	3.40	Killala	8/12/1984	Cleona Walkin
Ling	28	8	12.93	Achill Island	10/19/1980	William McGonigle
Mackerel	2	15	1.33	Eagle Island	9/28/1966	Tony Gilboy
Megrim*			1.85	Killala Bay	7/26/1987	Paul Hennigan
Monkfish	51	0	23.13	Broadhaven Bay	8/11/1967	A. G. Doree
Mullet - Red			0.78	Achill	8/30/2007	Joe Cooney
Mullet - Thick-lipped			3.74	Lough Furnace	7/26/1996	Markus Muller
Plaice	10	8	4.76	Achill Island	9/5/1973	James Stafford
Pollack	18	7	8.36	Enniscrone	10/25/2003	Joseph Halligan
Pouting	3	9	1.62	Mullaghmore	9/3/1982	Rudi Schosland
Ray - Blonde	26	12	12.13	Killala Bay	7/20/1969	E. Boucher
Ray - Cuckoo	4	11.5	2.14	Killala	9/15/1973	Paddy Whelan
Ray - Electric*			40.00	Achill	8/24/2002	Shay Boylan
Ray - Homelyn	6	7	2.92	Enniscrone	7/31/1977	Gerry Erskine
Ray - Painted			5.10	Achill	9/9/2005	Francis Hanrahan
Ray - Thornback	25	8	11.57	Enniscrone	7/31/1974	John Tucker
Red Sea Bream	5	13	2.64	Achill Island	8/7/1982	Nora McMullan
Shark - Blue*	206	0	93.44	Achill Island	10/7/1959	J. McMonagle
Shark - Porbeagle*	365		165.6	Keem Bay (Achill)	9/1/1960	Dr. O'Donel Brown
Skate - Common	173	0	78.47	Achill Island	9/19/1961	Rev. P. J. Downey
Skate - White	140	0	63.50	Enniscrone	7/12/1974	Anne W. vd Meulen
Tope	52	0	23.59	Broadhaven Bay	8/11/1963	W. J. Eley
Torsk			2.85	Belmullet	8/21/1988	Samuel Hull
Trigger Fish			1.93	Rosses Point	8/20/1995	Ciaran Henderson
Turbot	32	8	14.74	Belmullet	9/6/1980	Robert Seaman
Whiting	3	13	1.73	Belmullet	7/12/1973	Norman Dunlop
Wrasse - Ballan	6	7.5	2.93	Keel West	10/12/1962	P. McNamara
Wrasse - Cuckoo			0.73	Mullaghmore	5/5/1996	John Loftus

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