



ICRA Report for Ireland - IRC Congress 2022

Irish IRC and ECHO cert and market analysis

There are currently 265 IRC registered boats in Ireland, with a further 182 registered for an ECHO cert only. This is a moderate increase on 2021 numbers but there are still less boats with IRC certs than seen in 2018/2019.

Racing	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
ECHO certs issued	465	488	344	418	447
IRC Revalidation	295	270	193	242	246
IRC New	11	20	9	13	19
IRC Amendment	39	61	15	36	43
IRC Trial	42	34	28	21	9
IRC Short Handed	1	1	1	2	1
IRC Copy	36	24	10	15	10
Sail Numbers	85	107	91	92	80

The season returned to its normal run of annual events including all significant offshore and inshore regattas nationwide.

A couple of trends have emerged this year which is reflected across the country:

- Participation at regattas and club sailing has deteriorated significantly
- Participation in offshore racing has increased albeit from a low number base to start with
- Yachts travelling to regattas has dropped hugely (an example was very few Dublin boats attending Cork Week/ICRA Nationals)
- Younger crew member participation has dropped hugely
- Many boats struggle to get crew for longer regattas as the trend in sailing for younger crew is drifting away from yacht racing

IRC Ratings

1. There is constant complaint that the IRC system is not encouraging or accommodating older boats, particularly older IOR or IMS boats as their ratings generally seem to be coming out relatively high compared with “quick” cruiser racers such as J yachts. This is proving prohibitive on people restoring older yachts which can be done at an economic price.
2. Given the increasing desire for boats to compete in offshore and inshore events, there remains a strong demand for a 2 cert approach, where boats can have 2 certificates at the same time and be allowed to use one or the other, depending on the event. It is very expensive to continuously change between certs and any accusations of late changes are overcome by events having a cut off time to have certs agreed.
3. ICRA has discussed at length the fact that “cheating” whether knowingly or unknowingly is widespread and is taking affirmative action in this regard. Simple examples is loose lifelines, carrying wrong number of sails, etc. ICRA is starting an information campaign to highlight some of the fundamental rules as it believes that many sailors simply are not aware of these basic rules. Similarly, at the top end of the fleet, some boats are blatantly flouting the rules as they are confident that they will not be caught or protested. ICRA has decided to introduce scrutineering at not alone the ICRA National Championships, but also to request organisers of the major Irish regattas to do same. This was done successfully at this year’s WAVE regatta in Howth and a number of well know boats were found not to be compliant. It is very rare that boats are actually protested and disqualified as a result but ICRA intends to use 2023 as a year for “education” and 2024 as a year for penal enforcement.
4. There is active debate and request to allow crew numbers to be increased to encourage participation of under 18s and also females. It is our intention to allow an additional crew number for regattas if you carry either of the above categories. It has been trialled in the Half Ton Fleet where it was made mandatory to carry an under 18 at their National Championships and this proved very popular.

24/9/22