

Wild Salmon Management



Central Fisheries Board
An Príomh-Bhord Iascaigh

in Ireland

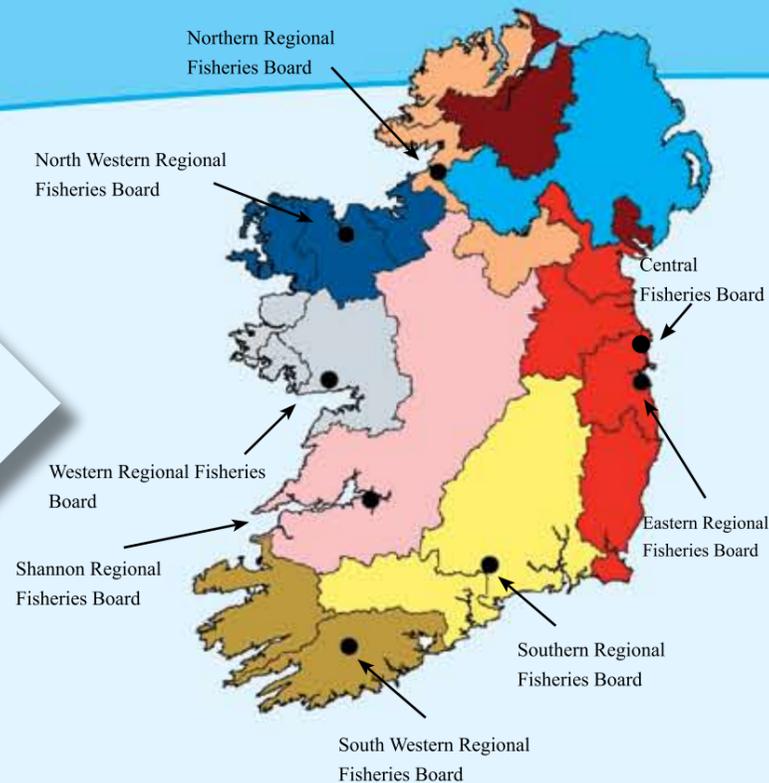
Fisheries Boards headquarters in eight key locations, with a large number of smaller local offices around the country.

Approx 450 staff dedicated to managing our fisheries habitat.

Annual budget of approx €30 million.

Up to 40 rigid inflatable boats (RIBS) and two large protection vessels for salmon protection.

Extensive research and development capability within the state services i.e. CFB, EPA, MI, BIM etc.



INTRODUCTION

Wild salmon in Ireland are part of our national identity and Ireland has been one of the largest producers of wild salmon in the North Atlantic. Ireland traditionally operated a commercial offshore fishery, an estuarine draft net fishery and in-river angling.

Fisheries managers and scientists have been concerned for a number of years about the declining numbers of salmon returning to the Irish Coast. Since 1996 a progressive series of conservation initiatives have been introduced to address this decline in stocks.

The ICES Advisory Committee on Fishery Management has advised that both Southern European 1Sea Winter and Multiple Sea Winter stocks are considered to be at risk of suffering reduced reproductive capacity and has recommended, inter alia, that:

“reductions in exploitation are required for as many wild salmon stocks as possible to increase the probability of the complex meeting conservation limits. Furthermore, due to the different status of individual stocks within the stock complex, mixed stock fisheries present particular threats to stock status.”

In 2002 Ireland introduced an annual quota for the angling & commercial salmon fishery and reduced that quota progressively on

an annual basis from 219,000 salmon in 2002 to 62,000 in 2007. In order to align fully with ICES and NASCO advice, the Irish Government has closed mixed stock fisheries in 2007. Harvest fisheries are now only allowed on stocks which are shown to have a surplus of fish over the conservation limit. Fisheries in estuaries are only permitted provided the stocks from individual rivers entering the estuaries are meeting conservation limits. A hardship scheme for drift net fishermen including all other commercial fishermen wishing to exit the fishery was introduced in 2007 providing a financial package for affected fishermen. The 2008 allowable harvest has shown an increase to 86,000 salmon which includes both a commercial and angling harvest and is distributed on an individual river basis.

Salmon are now managed on a river by river basis as opposed to a national or district basis. Rivers which have an identifiable surplus over the conservation limit are open for salmon & sea trout fishing. Rivers meeting in excess of 65% of the conservation limit are granted catch & release status subject to approval. Rivers for which there is insufficient scientific information or have a rod catch of less than 10 salmon remain closed. A scheme of rehabilitation of rivers was introduced with priority given to rivers which were below the conservation limit in areas of

SAC's funded through the introduction of a salmon conservation component on all angling & commercial licence sales.

The goal now is to encourage the recovery of stocks in those rivers not yet meeting their conservation limits and to manage all rivers in compliance with the Habitats Directive. In the face of decreasing marine survival, the challenge is to show an improvement in stocks in those rivers over the next few years through investment in habitat improvements and other initiatives.

The core policy goal being pursued by Government is to conserve the resource and facilitate its exploitation on an equitable and sustainable basis. The main challenges over the period 2008 – 2010 are in maintaining the regime introduced in 2007 and monitoring closely its impact on salmon stocks in order to maintain an equitable balance between conservation and exploitation.



Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
Roinn Cumarsaíde, Fuinnimh agus Acmhainní Nádurtha

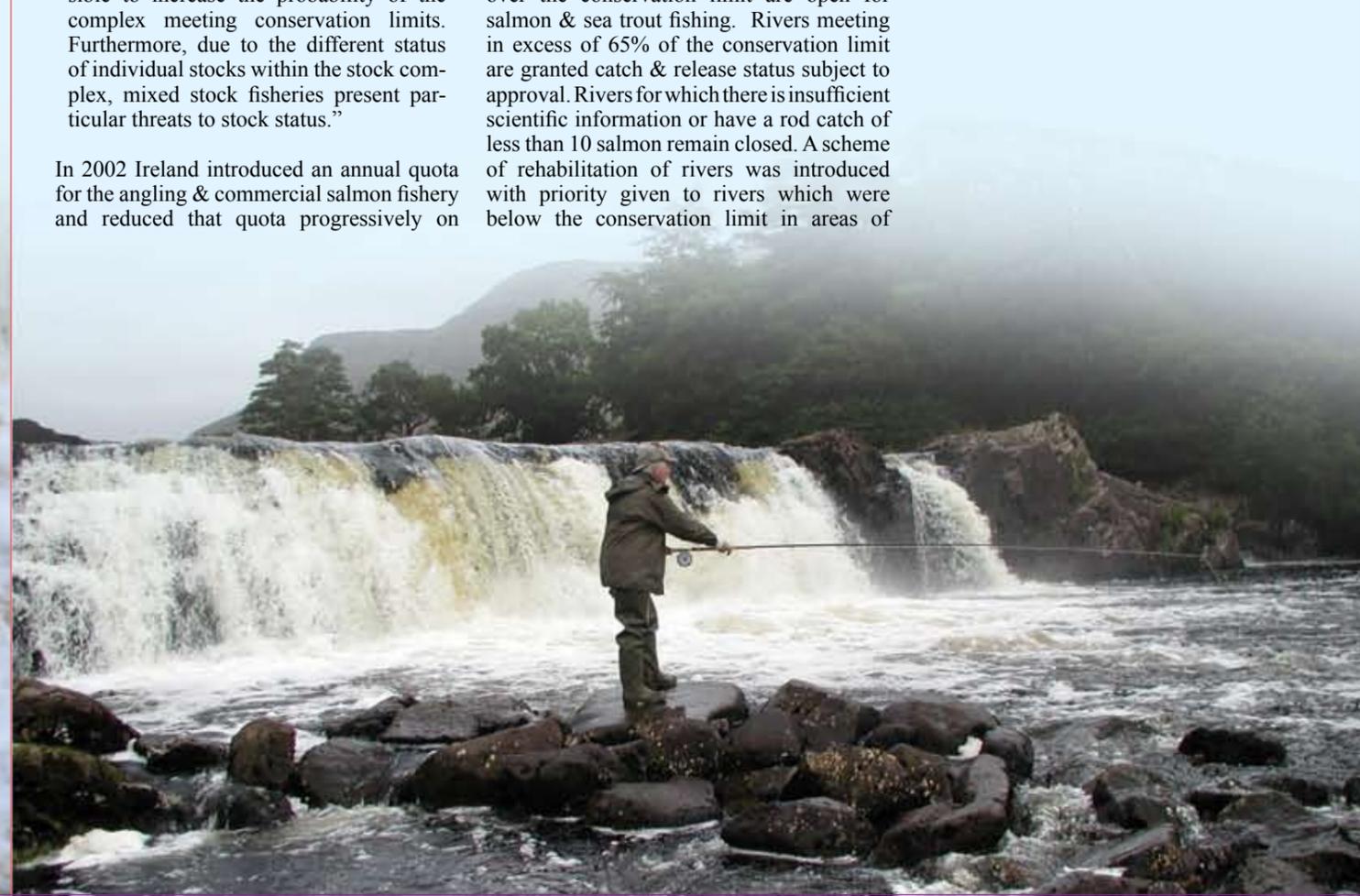


Department of
Culture, Arts
and Leisure



Marine Institute
Foras na Mara

www.wildsalmon.gov.ie

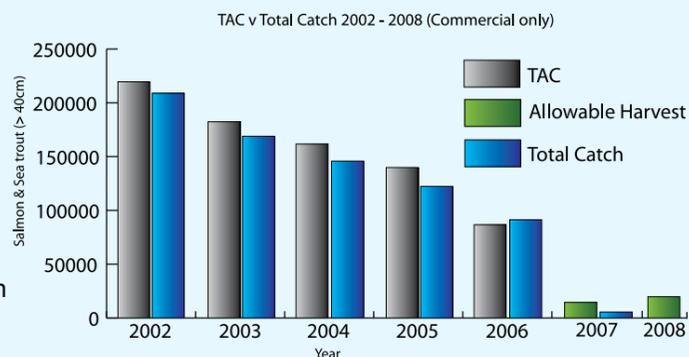


Where we *were*.....

In the 1990s Ireland was concerned at the decline of salmon numbers returning to the Irish Coast. The Minister for the Marine established a Salmon Task Force to consider this matter and advise him on how this decline might be arrested and stocks improved.

- 1996 - The Salmon Task Force reported in 1996 and, having considered its recommendations, the Minister introduced, amongst other things, the following conservation measures in 1997:

1. Fishing area reduced from 12 miles to 6 miles offshore.
2. Cap was placed on the total number of commercial licences issued.
3. Commercial season for draft netting postponed until May 12th and drift netting postponed until June 1st.
4. Fishing week reduced to 4 days.
5. Ban placed on night fishing.



- 2000 - Established the National Salmon Commission to advise Irish authorities on salmon management. This comprised of a Standing Scientific Committee (SSC), whose role was to support, advise and assist the National Salmon Commission on all appropriate technical and scientific matters.
- 2001 - Mandatory carcass tag and log book scheme introduced for all wild salmon and sea trout over 40cm and the sale of rod caught fish banned.
- 2002 - Introduction of Total Allowable Catch (TAC) for commercial salmon fishermen and a bag limit of 20 fish per angler per season. Commercial quota set at 219,000 salmon.
- 2003 - Commercial quota further reduced to 182,000 salmon. The Central Fisheries Board undertook an independent economic / socio economic evaluation of wild salmon in Ireland.
- 2004 - Commercial quota reduced even further to 162,000 salmon. The Standing Scientific Committee changed from using a catch based model to using a wetted area model, based on productive salmon habitat, for determining the conservation limits.
- 2005 - Commercial quota reduced even further to 140,000 salmon. Irish authorities confirm their commitment to have national and district quotas fully aligned with scientific advice provided by the Standing Scientific Committee by 2007.
- 2006 - Commercial quota reduced even further to 91,000 salmon. The terms of reference for the Standing Scientific Committee were amended so that advice is now to be provided on an individual catchment basis rather than a district basis. However as Ireland was still operating a mixed stock fishery at sea, the Standing Scientific Committee provided guidance figures on a district basis.

Where we *are*.....

- 2007 - Irish Authorities commit to aligning with the scientific advice for the 2007 salmon season and end mixed stock salmon fisheries at sea. Scientific advice is provided in the context of individual river stocks rather than aggregated district stocks. Harvest of salmon is only allowed in rivers where there is a surplus above the conservation limit identified and no more than this surplus will be harvested. The Irish Government introduces a hardship scheme for drift and draft net fishermen wishing to exit the fishery. The Irish Government decides to apply a salmon conservation component to the licence fee equal to the cost of the licence which contributes towards a programme for rehabilitation of salmon stocks, to be implemented by the Regional Fisheries Boards. The reported commercial catch was 8,877. The adjusted rod catch was 19,761.



- 2008 - With 148 listed salmon rivers, 62 are open for angling of which 22 are open on a catch & release basis and 86 rivers are closed. River rehabilitation projects carried out on rivers below conservation limit in areas of SAC's funded by the proceeds of the salmon conservation component generated from licence sales.
- In Northern Ireland a voluntary commercial salmon fishermen's buy-out scheme was implemented in the FCB jurisdiction in 2001 by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL). The DCAL implements a salmon management plan based on findings from the River Bush salmon research project, to establish spawning targets at a river and regional level to ensure sufficient adult salmon are spawning to maximise smolt output from freshwater. Management measures over recent years have included the buy-out of commercial fisheries, regulation of commercial fishing and angling exploitation, with both direct and indirect funding and implementation of habitat protection and restoration programmes.
- The 19 rivers which drain into the Foyle Catchment, which along with the Carlingford area is the responsibility of the Loughs Agency of the Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC), continue to exceed conservation limits on a regular basis. In 2007 the Agency rationalised its commercial fishery, ceasing all fishing in the area seaward of Lough Foyle and on a voluntary basis achieving a reduction of 84% in its drift net fishery and 80% in its tidal draft net fishery. Further restrictions on angling were also introduced. The agency has some concern with regard to the majority of the rivers in the Carlingford Catchment with regard to their conservation limits and management targets; however significant stock recovery works have been undertaken in the form of habitat improvement and restoration with the support of the European Economic Area (EEA) Cohesion Fund.



Where we are *going*.....

- Going forward Ireland is committed to continuing to follow scientific advice both nationally and internationally from NASCO and ICES.
- As outlined in Ireland's National Implementation plan (NASCO CNL(07)22) the following will occur over the next 5 year period:
 - o Greater investment in assessing the status of the salmon stocks in all our rivers.
 - o Investment in those rivers that are below the conservation limit to achieve the recovery of stocks.
 - o Investment in habitat rehabilitation and other measures to support stock recovery.
 - o Giving particular attention to the recovery of salmon stocks in Special Areas of Conservation (SAC's) designated rivers as outlined in Council Directive 92/43/EEC (on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild flora and fauna).
 - o Continuing to improve our salmon protection and development service.
 - o Continuing with the modernisation of the State agencies servicing this sector.
 - o Creating greater awareness both nationally and internationally of the environmental and cultural importance of this wild species and its economic and socio/economic value.
 - o Continuing to work with all the stakeholders.
 - o This programme will integrate with the River Basin Management Plans required under the Water Framework Directive.

