



FISHING ON LOUGHS CONN & CULLIN

TROUT FISHING

The vast majority of trout taken on the loughs are taken on wet flies when trout are moving near the surface during seasonal fly hatches but, even in the quiet periods, between hatches, it is nearly always possible to attract the attention of trout with a team of well presented wet flies. Trout fishing generally starts around the 17th March with the trout feeding voraciously on freshwater shrimp, snails and hoglice.

The chief fly hatches of interest to the trout are chironomids, lake olives, mayflies and sedges. Other forms of food are freshwater shrimp, freshwater louse, snails and various land based insects that get blown onto the water such as daddies etc. Dry fly fishing with representative patterns of these terrestrial insects can be very successful in the right conditions.

Dry mayfly and spent gnat imitations can also entice rising fish when the hatches and falls of these flies are abundant and can produce sport even when fished 'blind', when no significant numbers of fly are observed on the surface.

As with all wet fly fishing for brown trout, the greatest success has traditionally been achieved in the shallower areas. The shallows are to be found at a large number of locations around the lough as shown on the map. The northern end of Lough Conn, in particular, is well endowed with shallow areas. The large shallow bays e.g. Cloghans Bay, Bog Bay and Castlehill Bay can be fished all over and fishing in these areas is possible in almost all wind directions. The most productive areas for buzzer fishing on Conn are Cloghans Bay and Bog Bay (Enniscoe).



FLY SIZES

The fly sizes fished on the loughs vary from size 8 to size 14, but sizes 10 through to 14 are the most popular and useful.

EARLY SEASON

This is the period from about mid-March to the end of April. The trout are mainly interested in a diet of freshwater louse and freshwater shrimp but even light hatches of small chironomids (midges) or olives will encourage fish to feed near the surface. Wet flies are the most productive style during this period.

Given some mild weather, large chironomids, colloquially known as 'Duckfly' appear. Trout feed on all stages of the duckfly hatch, with buzzer fishing also productive at this time of year.

The fly patterns most likely to interest trout during this period are small, size 14 or 12. Examples include the Fiery Brown, Sooty Olive, Peter Ross, Soldier Palmer, Bibio, March Brown, Green Olive, Mallard and Claret, Duckfly, Blae and Black, Claret Dabblar, Golden Dabblar and a variety of buzzers including black or olive buzzers.

MAYFLY SEASON

The loughs have one of the longest mayfly seasons of any water in the country.

Mayflies start appearing around mid-April and from then to the end of June when sporadic hatches can still occur. Some very exciting fishing can be had at this time. Mayfly hatch all over the shallower areas and bays of Lough Conn and throughout Lough Cullin. On Conn, the most prolific hatches take place north of a line from Castlehill to Rinmore.

All Mayfly patterns, fished wet, work well and some excellent sport can be enjoyed with dry patterns, especially the Wulff series, mayfly emerger and spent gnat imitations.

In suitable wind and weather conditions, in late May and right through June, the mayflies (gnats) return to the water to lay their eggs. The trout prey heavily on them as they sit trapped in the surface film. The artificial flies most likely to take trout at mayfly time are the Green Peter, Mayfly (hackled), Bibio, Watson's Fancy, Olive Bumble, Cock Robin, Claret Bumble, Invicta, Green Dabblar, Golden Dabblar, Claret Dabblar and Spent Gnat.



LATE SEASON

Trout fishing on Conn slows down in early July but picks up again in August and, depending on conditions, can be very good from then to the close of the season on the 30th of September. From the 1st of July to the end of the season, very little fly fishing is carried out on Cullin.

All the sedge patterns – Green Peter, Murrough, Brown Sedge – work well as do the Black and Peacock Spider, Bibio, Sooty Olive, Olive Bumble, Watson's Fancy, Black Pennell, Golden Olive, Invicta, Connemara Black, Claret Dabblar and Golden Dabblar and Daddies.

SALMON FISHING

To fish for salmon on the loughs, anglers must be in possession of a valid State Salmon Rod Licence, logbook and tags. The main run of spring fish enters the loughs from the end of March and continues right through until May. The grilse run begins in May and continues into early August. Some fish are taken on fly, generally by anglers fishing for trout, but the majority are taken by trolling lures. The most popular types of lure are Copper and Silver Spoons, Tobys

and Devon Minnows. Even tube flies can be successful on occasion.

Salmon tend to confine themselves to well defined areas which are known to the local boatmen. The best known and most frequently fished locations are A: the northern end of Lough Conn, in particular, the area around the mouth of the Deel River, B: Victoria Bay, Cuilkillaw (Cornakillew), Massbrook and Castlehill Bay in the south-western and western areas of the lake. The strait at Pontoon Bridge between Loughs Conn and Cullin is a favourite haunt for salmon anglers fishing from the shore with most salmon taken here on worms and baits. Local Bye-Laws apply to this area and anglers should check with the local Inland Fisheries Ireland office or tackle shops for details as these may be subject to change.



INFORMATION

SAFETY

Both lakes contain a large number of dangerous rocks just below the water surface. Lough Cullin is particularly rocky. In general, individual and small groups of rocks are indicated by distinctive rock markers as shown. A single marker may signify the presence of a number of rocks in its general vicinity.

However, anglers should not assume that every rock or every group of rocks, in each lake is marked. Visiting anglers, in particular, are strongly advised to exercise caution, as water levels on the lakes can fluctuate significantly. Those unfamiliar with the lakes should avail of the services of local boatmen or guides.

The law requires that persons venturing out on to lakes and coastal waters, in a boat less than 7m in length, wear a properly fitting, and approved, personal flotation device or a lifejacket (S.I. No. 921 of 2005). As with boat fishing anywhere, anglers are advised to check local weather forecasts before venturing out.

ANGLING RETURNS

Accurate and detailed angling returns are difficult to compile on waters the size of Loughs Conn and Cullin, with so many piers, jetties and private access points located around the shore. All salmon caught, whether released or retained, should be added to the anglers' log book and returned to Inland Fisheries Ireland at the end of the season. The co-operation of all anglers in the collection of angling returns is requested as this information is vital for the proper management of the fishery.

ANGLERS' SHELTERS

Anglers' shelters have been provided at a number of locations around the shores and on islands on Lough Conn. These locations are indicated on the map with a 🏠.

LITTER

Please protect out environment – take your litter home!

ANGLING COMPETITIONS

Several trout fishing competitions are held on Loughs Conn and Cullin each year and many of these are open to visitors. Details of these are available from local fishing clubs or from Inland Fisheries Ireland.

ACCOMMODATION

There is a wide variety of accommodation available in the area, ranging from comfortable bed and breakfast accommodation in both town and country homes and farmhouses to small family run hotels, luxurious castles, old world inns and homely guesthouses. There is also a wide choice of quality self catering accommodation options available.

Anglers are advised to stay only at premises registered or approved by Fáilte Ireland, most of these properties display the Fáilte Ireland approved accommodation sign. For information on accommodation, things to see and do, festivals and events, contact Ballina Tourist Office or see www.northmayo.com, www.ireland.com or www.discoverireland.ie.



INFORMATION

BOAT HIRE

A list of angling ghillies and guides who offer services on the loughs is available from Inland Fisheries Ireland, Ballina office. These details can also be found at www.fishinginireland.info. Boat hire providers are listed below:

Ken Hall, Foxford, Co. Mayo
Tel: +353 (0)86 8846920
Email: kenhall@mayoangling.com

Padraic Kelly, Newtown, Cloghans, Co. Mayo
Tel: +353 (0)96 22250

Paddy McDonnell
Barnacouge, Swinford, Co. Mayo.
Tel: +353 (0)87 4123235
Email: bluecharm@eircom.net

Gerry Murphy, Browns Bay, Massbrook, Crossmolina, Co. Mayo
Tel: +353 (0)96 51294
Mob: +353 (0)87 2390409

Vinny O'Boyle, Knockfree, Ballina, Co. Mayo
Tel: +353 (0)96 31209

Kenny Sloan, Riverside, Foxford, Co. Mayo.
Tel: +353 (0)94 56501
Mob: +353 (0)87 9670310
Email: ksloan@eircom.net

Tiernan Brothers, Main St Foxford, Co. Mayo
Tel: +353 (0)94 9256731
Email: foxfordangling@eircom.net

Ian Wise, Cloonamoyne Fishery, Enniscoe House, Ballina, Co. Mayo
Tel: +353 (0)87 7697193
Email: ian@cloonamoynefishery.com



FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on angling in the Lough Conn and Cullin area may be obtained from Inland Fisheries Ireland, Ardnaree House, Abbey St., Ballina Co. Mayo. Tel: +353 (0)96 22788, Email: ballina@fisheriesireland.ie or Web: www.fishinginireland.info.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

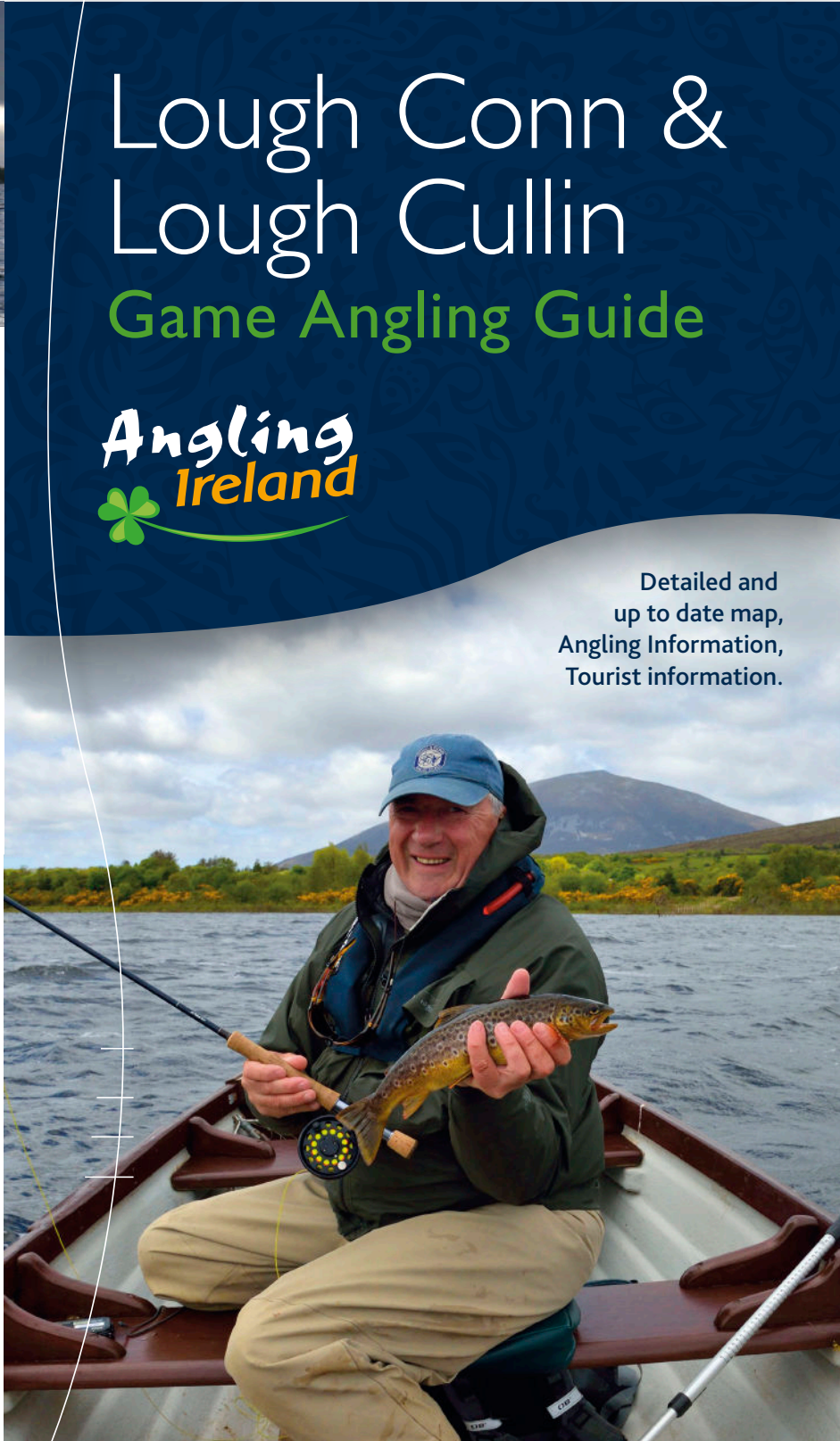
Inland Fisheries Ireland would like to thank the following who supplied photographs for use in this guide: Alastair Gowans, Paddy McDonnell, and Kenny Sloan. Also Inland Fisheries Ireland staff Markus Müller, Kevin O'Boyle, Shane O'Reilly, Padraig Traynor and Bryan Ward.



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ANGLING REGULATIONS

OPEN SEASON

Salmon: 1st February – 30th September
Trout: 15th February – 30th September

SIZE LIMIT

Minimum size limit for trout is 12 inches (30.48cm)

PERMISSION

A permit is not required to fish these lakes. However, a state salmon licence is required by law for salmon fishing. Licences are widely available from tackle shops, Inland Fisheries Ireland and online at www.fishinginireland.info.

BAG LIMIT

At present there is no bag limit in operation on the loughs, although anglers are required, in the interests of conservation of stocks, to carefully release all under sized fish. Anglers are also requested to release as many trout as possible while angling.


LOUGHS CONN AND CULLIN

Lough Conn is located approximately 6km south west of the town of Ballina in north County Mayo and 1km south east of Crossmolina, while Cullin lies 3km west of Foxford and together they form part of the River Moy catchment (total area 2080km2).

Conn, with an area of 5665 hectares, is fed in the north by the River Deel and many other smaller tributaries, with the lakes joining through a short channel at Pontoon Bridge. Lough Cullin, area 1019 hectares, receives water from Conn, the Carra, Tobergal and Clydagh Rivers and drains into the River Moy from its south east corner through what is known, locally, as the ‘Lake River’.

The lakes support a large population of trout as well as migrating salmon, pike, roach and perch, with both accessible either from the shore or by boat.

ACCESS

Access to Loughs Conn and Cullin is available at several principal locations including Gortnorabbey Pier, Philulawakhouse Bay, Gillaroo (Brown's) Bay, Schoolhouse Bay, Brackwansha, Cloghans and Pontoon. These locations are indicated on the map by the  symbol.

FISHING TACKLE

For traditional methods of lough style fishing, rods between 2.9m (9'6") and 3.35m (11') are used with a floating line. Floating lines are mainly used when fishing dry flies and buzzers, with popular dry flies including mayflies, spent gnats, sedges and daddies. Intermediate lines are now very popular especially in early and late months of the season, with both sinking and intermediate lines employed for wet fly fishing. The usual method is short casting in front of a drifting boat and bobbing a bushy fly, e.g. bumble and dabbler varieties, on the top dropper through and across the wave.

