March

Angling Council of Ireland Newsletter

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Coaching Irelands Anglers -Tutor Development Course

Der Casey NCFFI and Bob Seward of SSTRAI are currently undergoing a Tutor Development Course (TDC 26) with Coaching Ireland at University of Limerick.

The aim of the Tutor Development Course is to introduce tutors to the Coaching Development Programme for Ireland (CDPI) and their role within it's implementation.

Its objectives are to consider the implications of the CDPI for the role of the tutor as follows

(a) to have tutors identify the characteristics which they feel contribute to effective tutoring,

(b) to practically undertake and consider for ones own tutoring style, the following skills

- Plan and write outcomes
- Apply interactive learning outcomes
- Use audio visual aids
- Self evaluate one's own tutoring style
- Feedback to a fellow tutor

The course introduces tutors to the CDPI Syllabus, LTPAD (Long Term Player /Athlete Development or in our case Long Term Angler Development (LTAD)

LISPA (Long Term involvement in a Sport and Physical Activity and other up-to-date issues relevant to the role of a tutor with a National Governing Body.

During the course tutors are provided with support materials to assist them in developing their tutoring abilities and to assist them in their role as tutors for their sport in the context of CDPI. On the successful completion of the course and a number of supervised coaching sessions the tutors will role out Coaching Courses across the country.

Special points of interest:

- EU Water Framework Directive
- Guidelines for Code of Ethics and Good Practice for Children in Angling Sport.
- Implementation Plan
- Irish Sports Council set the standards for Angling Coach Tutors
- River Basin District Angling Pillar Nominations
- Angling Council of Ireland

Guidelines for Code of Ethics for Children in Sport

The guidelines are for use by all members of the Angling Council of Ireland in their dealings with the public.

The Child Care Act, 1991, defines "child " as "a person under the age of 18 years other than a person who is or has been married.

In these guidelines the words child and young person are used interchangeably and refer to a person under 18 years of age.

The principle, which should inform best practice in child protection, is that the welfare of the child is of paramount importance. All organisations, whether statutory or voluntary, have an overall corporate responsibility to safeguard children, and should pay particular attention to the following,

Safe and clearly defined methods of selecting staff and volunteers

Developing effective procedures for the reporting and management of child protection concerns

Identifying a designated staff member / volunteer to act as a liaison with outside agencies and as a resource person to any staff member or volunteer who has child protection concerns.

The designated person will be responsible for reporting allegations or suspicions of child abuse to the Health Boards or An Garda Síochána.

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EAA
European Anglers Alliance

CORMORANT NUMBERS ARE ON THE INCREASE

EU VOTE ON THE ISSUE OF A PAN EUROPEAN CULL TO HELP PROTECT SALMON STOCKS

MORE ON PAGE 7

Turbines New Designs may lead to lower mortality percentage

'Fish friendly' turbines

Recently the discussion often involves what is referred to as 'fish friendly' turbines in hydraulic power plants. The term 'fish friendly' turbines originated in the United States of America, where the government and companies such as Alden Research conducted numerous studies in this field.

Mainly due to a changed design of the turbines and the guide paddles, a lower percentage of fish mortality could be achieved. This is often at the expense of the return of these turbines, resulting whereof the energy companies are – generally - not enthusiastic to integrate these in the turbines.
Moreover the term 'fish friendliness' is rather misleading. In practice it often involves 'less-fish unfriendly' turbines. In relation to smaller plants in shipping channels, etc., a type of reverse Archimedes screw turbine is now considered. The Archimedes screw has been used in pumping stations for centuries, and could be adjusted in a significantly fish friendly manner by means of a number of modifications.

This principle can also be reversed; by having water run through, the screw can also be activated and function as a turbine.
How the efficiency of these 'corkscrew' turbines relates to the existing Kaplan and Francis turbines and whether they are suited for plants in the major rivers is yet unclear.

The European Anglers Alliance (EAA) and hydro power

The European Anglers Alliance (EAA) is unhappy with many of Europe's existing hydro power stations, which urgently need modification to reduce the fish mortality problem. The EAA is also extremely worried that in the near future we are to experience a considerable increase in investments in more European

European Anglers Alliance

hydropower stations as this might seem at a first glance a sensible way for the EU to meet its increasing energy demands while complying with comprehensive environmental commitments. However these must include the necessary fish passes and guidance systems to protect and enhance the fish stocks.

What the European Anglers Alliance (EAA) want:

1. The EU and member states should develop a consistent and harmonised policy on hydropower stations, taking into account all EU and national legislation regarding water management and the conservation of (migratory) fish species. The EAA wishes to note in this respect that the EU has agreed on eel emergency measures and a long term eel management plan, which will have consequences for about 125 European river basins. Both plans take precedence over other EU policies, like energy policies. So an energy development plan cannot be forced through while sacrificing objectives or measures of the EU plans regarding the eel.
2. Having regard to (and respecting) the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the Liability Directive, the EAA foresees that some hydropower stations may have to be closed. The EAA urges that a comprehensive

Hydro Electric Dams and Fish Passes The European View

environmental and economic impact assessment be conducted on all proposed hydro power plants. Such an assessment should be required as a consequence of the above mentioned directives but also the Commission Resource Strategy of December 2005.
3. All existing hydro power plants should as soon as possible be provided with a proven effective fish guidance system (for downstream migration) and a fish passage (for upstream migration). The functioning of both systems should be evaluated. If they do not function, adjustment of the system, compensation of the damage, or closure of the plant should be considered.
4. No new hydro power plants should be built, unless it can be proven that the intended Hydro Power complex have no negative effects on the sustainable management of the fish stocks in the system. Because of their low energy production, their low cost-efficiency in relation to the enormous damage they cause to fish stocks and the virtual impossibility of equipping them with effective fish guidance systems, small hydropower stations should be given extra attention by all parties involved. In principle,

Hydro Power Stations can be deadly for upstream migration fish

no new small hydropower stations (< 10 MW) should be built on rivers that (could) have runs of migratory fish.
5. All new to be built hydro power stations (on the above mentioned terms) should be provided with a proven effective fish guidance system (for downstream migration) and a fish passage (for upstream migration). Consequently, national and European subsidies should only be awarded for the construction of hydro power stations if these conditions are met.

Hydro power stations can be deadly for upstream migrating salmon as well. This salmon was severely wounded while trying to enter the outlet of a turbine time and again.

Inniscarra dam Cork no free passage for migratory species

National Fisheries Week 22nd May to 30th May by Der Casey

The soon to be formed Inland Fisheries Ireland will roll out a week of activities with a Fisheries theme during this week in May. This will be the first major public event for IFI and so they are anxious for a successful outcome. This week offers angling clubs the opportunity grow a great relationship with IFI staff, as well as promoting their own sport in their local region. So what can we do and how do we go about it.
In the Southern Region ACI clubs have formulated a programme of activities covering many of our angling colleges. Lessons learned in last year's National Angling Week have been applied. No open invitation to the public is the major change for us. Working with local schools, youth clubs, and adult groups, it's possible to know how many novice anglers you will have to deal with.

This single nugget of information can make the difference

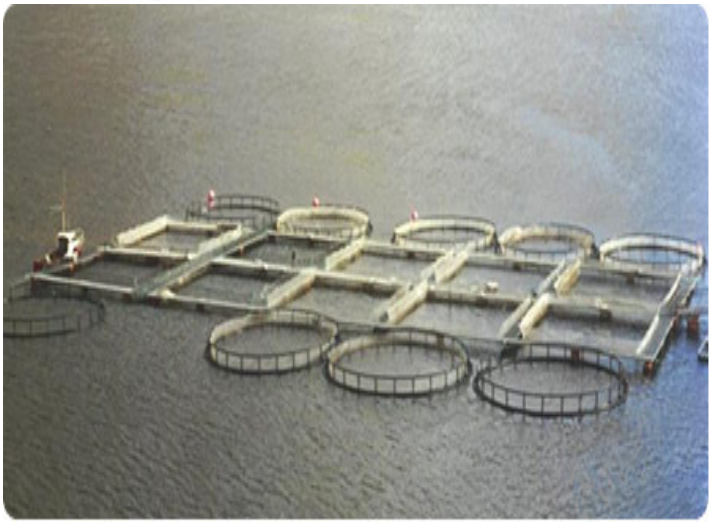
ALL HANDS ON DECK FOR ANGLING WEEK IN MAY

simply surviving the experience and having a really memorable day. A day or evening where you have enough volunteers, enough bait and enough tackle and hopefully a few obliging fish. A day when everyone gets attention and time to learn the new skills. Trust us we've all had the other kind of day. The only good thing about the "other kind" of day is, that like banging your head on a wall, it ends eventually.

This week offers the chance to get support for your efforts to promote your club. Fisheries staff can help out on the day; they can help make contacts and they can provide some financial support. The local Sports Partnerships are more than willing to make contacts for introductory angling days. If you want to develop the day into a multi event programme the sports partnerships can offer funding to help with costs.
All that stands between you and a great day is the first phone call. Make it soon .

GIVE ANGLING A GO!
FREE EVENTS FOR FISHERIES AWARENESS WEEK WWW.CFB.IE

FISH FARMS THREATEN SALMON STOCKS



MARINE SALMON FARM

Unregulated Fish Farms Threaten Salmon Production across the Globe

The recent escapes of tens of thousands of farmed salmon from the pens in several primary producing countries serve a grim reminder that the environmental impacts of salmon farming remain to be addressed," said Gerald Leape, senior officer at the Pew Environment Group. "These massive escapes also reinforce the point that any open ocean aquaculture legislation approved by Congress must have strong mandatory standards that prevent environmental impacts by farms that are built in US waters."

At a farmed salmon awareness event held earlier this week in Washington, Pew hosted a roundtable discussion and premiered a new documentary exposing farmed salmon.

FILM SHOWS DAMAGE CAUSED BY FISH FARMS

"Farmed Salmon Exposed: The Global Reach of the Norwegian Salmon Farming Industry," by Canadian filmmaker Damien Gillis. The film visually portrays the damage caused by open-net salmon farms to marine ecosystems worldwide. It features firsthand accounts of the environmental, socio-economic and cultural problems linked to global salmon farms. Norwegian-based firms dominate world production of farmed salmon.

"As someone with a personal and business interest in sustainable seafood, it's critical that we apply an eco-friendly ethic when establishing fish farms in our federal waters," said Barton Seaver, chef/ Blue Ocean Institute Fellow. "We have an opportunity to support people and businesses as they make great progress towards creating aquaculture technology that is both sustainable and profitable. However, if we don't take a precautionary, conservation-minded approach to aquaculture, we run the risk of shooting ourselves in the foot."

For the past three years, the Pure Salmon Campaign, a global project with partners in the United States, Canada, Europe, Australia and Chile, has organised one week each Autumn to expose the problems with the farmed salmon industry. This year, the Global Week of Action runs from November 9 - 13, 2009. As a coalition member, the Pew Environment Group joins other organisations in calling on industry leaders to adopt more sustainable, environmentally-friendly practices.

"Norwegian multinationals are exporting environmental pollution, spreading sea lice and infectious diseases and allowing mass escapes in Canada, Chile, Scotland, Ireland and in Norway," said Don Staniford, global coordinator of the Pure

NORWEGIANS EXPORTING ENVIRONMENTAL POLLUTION

Salmon Campaign. "We urgently need to close the net on the worst problems of the salmon farming sector. That requires the adoption of the best available closed containment technology and the relocation of salmon farms away from migratory corridors for wild fish."

The Fish Site News Desk

SALMON FARM AT SCRAGGY BAY

ACI STRATEGIC PLAN 2010 – 2015

It is recognised that the Angling Council of Ireland (ACI) is the governing body for five different branches of the sport of angling throughout the island of Ireland namely, Sea Angling, Coarse Angling, Pike (game) Angling, Trout Angling, Salmon and Sea Trout Angling. These may be divided into three general categories, Sea, Game and Coarse.

The ACI Committee is comprised of Elected delegates from each of the National Angling Representative Organisations affiliated with the ACI. All ACI Executive Officers are elected from the committee at the annual AGM in accordance with the ACI constitution. Each angling branch has different requirements and commitments with most but not all being involved in competitive angling. Angling in Ireland is not only seen as a competitive sport, it is a life- long leisure activity for many, it is a source of employment and income for others and if properly managed and developed has the potential to make Ireland a world class tourist destination for anglers.
Ireland has as many rivers as we have roads, we have a huge variety of fish species around our coastline, we have superb lakes with good facilities all within easy reach.

We have the infrastructure to support the vast number of participants involved and have identified areas for improvement. Anglers and fish share many impediments to improvement in the aquatic environment many of which may be easily resolved through meaningful dialogue.

Anglers of all persuasions have long flagged the deterioration of the aquatic environment and of certain fish stocks. Over many years anglers have taken serious action to prevent certain disastrous consequences of mismanagement to the resource.

Anglers have spent their own resources in the past and continue to do so to develop their local waters and to protect them from predation.
Anglers have influenced regional and national thinking on the development of the resource, because anglers are part of the national fisheries resource.

Angling Council of Ireland (ACI) is the governing body for five different branches of the sport of angling throughout the island of Ireland

The Angling Council of Ireland Strategic Plan 2010 — 2015 is available on the ACI website **www.anglingcouncilireland.ie**

European Anglers Alliance

The European Anglers Alliance (EAA), which was founded in 1994 after a seven year gestation period, is a European-wide organisation with 3.5 million members in 14 countries. It is recognised by the European Union as a non-governmental organisation (NGO) and an Environmental Pressure Group for anglers, fish and the aquatic environment. It has a permanent office in Brussels and employs a full-time Secretary-General. The Angling Council of Ireland, its member organisations and members are affiliated to EAA.

Cormorants

Problems and solutions

Cormorants in Europe

The most common species of cormorant in Europe is the Great Cormorant (Phalacrocorax carbo), with the two barely distinguishable subspecies. Cormorants are found both at sea coasts and around inland waters. Generally they favour large waters, but when fish stocks become insufficient on those preferred sites they also hunt in smaller rivers in low to medium mountain ranges.

Cormorants eat nothing but fish, requiring 400-600 grams per day. They are opportunists in the sense that they do not have any preference for particular species of fish but eat whichever are easiest to catch. They mostly feed on fish between 10 and 25 cm long, but sometimes catch and consume fish up to 60 cm and 1 kg.

Wire mesh cages are placed to create artificial hiding places for fish.

Problem-situation

Cormorants mostly fly to hunting waters in relatively large flocks. Upon arrival they normally hunt individually, but often also hunt in groups ranging from 25 to several hundred birds, which first surround the fish, with the result that in some waters they are able to consume a high percentage of the fish population in a relatively short time.
In continental Europe the cormorant population was greatly reduced due to the combined effects of habitat degradation and human persecution in the 19th century, then it stayed rather stable for 70 years, that means from 1890 till 1960, on a level of 20.000 to 30.000 birds.

The number of breeding-pairs alone is nowadays counted at 372.000 couples, that is 774.000 individuals. Cormorants are large, long-lived birds, which start to breed only at the age of 3 to 5 years.

The total autumn population in Europe is estimated at a minimum of 1.7 to 1.8 million birds.

The conservation of their breeding sites and the protection measures following the Wild Birds Directive (79/409/EEC) of 1979 are among the instruments which have led to a disproportionate and virtually explosive growth in the cormorant population, and the birds have now also taken up residence far outside their traditional breeding grounds in regions where they didn't occur originally.

This over-abundant population has had a direct impact on local fish populations and on fishing in many areas of the European Union The following facts illustrate the problem:

- Cormorants have no natural enemies anymore.
- European cormorants take more than 300 000 tons of fish every year.
- 300 000 tons is more, for example, than the combined fish production from aquaculture of France, Spain, Italy, Germany, Hungary and the Czech Republic.
- Particularly serious are the losses of fish species which are already endangered, such as eel, grayling, nase and other species which spawn on gravel beds.
- Smolt mortality in the Skjern River by cormorants amounted to 48% in some years. This is endangering the Skjern population of Atlantic Salmon
- In the last 25 years, trout and especially Grayling populations all over Europe have suffered heavily from the predation by cormorants on a scale never seen before.
- Nobody seems to remember having seen cormorants in such large numbers. In fact, old records show no presence of breeding colonies of cormorants in areas that nowadays are heavily colonised.

Anglers spend millions of Euros annually on their sport Cormorant predation is putting the livelihoods of entire communities, dependent on angling tourism, at risk.

Solutions

It is absolutely necessary to bring back the stocks of Cormorants to numbers that are sustainable by nature (a man-made or modified nature that is). So far there has been no EU-wide coordination of such measures and/or harmonisation of national legal regulations in this field.

Fish that are too large to be eaten by cormorants, are sometimes severely wounded

Key questions and operative proposals

On 5th of December 2008, after comprehensive preparatory discussions, the European Parliament adopted a resolution which urges the EU Commission "to promote the sustainable management of cormorant populations …. and to create appropriate conditions for the drafting of a Europe-wide cormorant population management plan." The resolution stated that, purely local and/or national measures are not capable of reducing for any length of time the impact of cormorants. A common, legally binding approach which is accepted and applied throughout Europe is therefore absolutely essential. This approach is necessitated by the extraordinarily high mobility of the cormorant as a migratory bird.

Many Pike caught show tell tale signs of wounds

The report that is to be put on the table by the European Commission must therefore comprehensively deal with the following issues:

1. Improvement of the scientific gathering of reliable data on breeding populations. Development of a scientific model to estimate total cormorant numbers
2. Which ways can be found to promote bilateral and multilateral scientific and administrative exchanges, both within the EU and with third countries?
3. The concept of 'serious damage' as used in the Wild Birds Directive should be specified more clearly in the interests of uniform interpretation.
4. What are scientifically justified practical measures which - provided that they were internationally well coordinated – could lastingly reduce the number of cormorants?
5. Within what time frame could a European Cormorant Management Plan be adopted in practice?
6. What can the EU legislature specifically do to reduce the adverse impact of cormorant populations on fishing and aquaculture? What legal instruments are available for this purpose?
7. Financial and infrastructure resources should be made available for the above purposes. What role or task could the Commission take on in this connection, and what funding would be necessary for this?

11. How can Member States be motivated to participate actively in such a management plan?

The final objective must be to arrive at a fair balance between cormorants, fish stocks and legitimate fishery interests.

AGM of ACI sees changes at the top

Anglers gathered at Sports HQ on March 13th for the AGM of Angling Council of Ireland. This occasion was a significant one in the history of the Council.

Hugh O Rorke stood down as Hon. Secretary this year. Hugh has held this position since the founding of the Council and many credit him with steering the fledgling organisation through some very stormy waters. However, Hugh's expertise and in depth, not to say encyclopaedic, knowledge of the world of angling politics is not lost to us as he continues on the council as an I.F.S.A. delegate. Despite this it was felt appropriate to mark his stepping down from the Hon. Sec.

The council presented him with a cut crystal bowl. The piece was designed and created by some of Waterford master craftsmen and featured four personalised panels. These were engraved with the ACI and the IFSA logos, artistic renderings of both shore and boat angling and an expression of thanks from ACI.
At the business end of the meeting a new look council was elected. Eamonn Moore continues as chairman, with Martin Mc Enroe elected as Vice Chairman. Bob Seward is the new Hon Sec and Alan Nolan was elected as Assistant Secretary. Der Casey was confirmed as National Child Liaison Officer. John Crudden will continue as Treasurer and John Chambers was elected PRO for 2010. Tom Lillis will continue to fill the post of National Coaching Coordinator.
Issues around data protection were highlighted in a discussion of our Child Protection Policies These policies together with explanatory booklets are now ready for printing. Every club will soon have copies delivered and the process of making Angling Ireland fully compliant, with best practice in this area, will begin in earnest.

The months ahead will see major structural changes to our organisation. The details will be published in our next edition

EAA Action on EU Policies and Laws

Maritime and Sea Fisheries Environment - EU policies and laws

Common Fisheries Policy
The reform of the CFP is ongoing till the end of 2012. EAA had made a submission to the Commission setting out our priorities.

- Look for recognition of Recreational Sea Angling (RSA) in the CFP.
- Ask for a Recreational Marine working group to be established on ACFA
- Seek better catch and socio-economic data on RSA and the RSA sector
- Lobby for recreational angling to be allowed within MPAs.
- Lobby increase in minimum landing sizes and net meshes.

Highlight the impact of aquaculture on fish stocks of importance to RSA.

E U Water Framework Directive

Freshwater environment - EU policies and laws

Water Framework Directive
The WFD is being implemented since 2000. Many objectives and provisions in the directive are important tools for the angling community, which EAA members need to know about to make the most out of it.

- EAA members will share experiences within the Subgroup River Systems.
- Continue to work with other stakeholders on the SCG and its working groups.

Keep the members informed of all developments

Small Hydropower stations
Hydropower is regarded by authorities, industry, decision makers and "green" NGOs as "green and clean" energy, which it is not when taking account of the damage it does to rivers and the life in them. EAA has a great responsibility to showcase and argue the critical aspects of small hydropower stations as nobody else is doing it.

- EAA Task Force- Alpine Waters will draft a Position Paper.
- Identify MEP's who are "friendly" to angling
- Undertake a lobby campaign in the European Parliament

Produce a TV documentary on the effects of hydropower

Sea Bass

There is evidence from the UK and France that their bass stocks are under pressure. EAA has lobbied for a number of years to have the Minimum Landing Size to be set higher to allow the bass to spawn at least once.
EAA Task Force on Bass will prepare a draft Bass Management Plan for the GA 2010.

Youth programmes

Children and young people represent our future, and the EAA is working in conjunction with our partner EFTTA to promote the social, environmental and economic benefits of angling to young people across Europe and will continue to encourage member nations to establish participation programmes for them.

Socio-economic importance of angling

The EAA is working to promote the huge economic, environmental and social contribution which recreational angling makes to all the nations of Europe. We have achieved some success in getting the EU to undertake a small scoping study but we still have a lot to do to get a full study done.

The Angling Council of Ireland will work with all those interested in maintaining and improving angling in Ireland and wishes to acknowledge the support given by Irish Sports Council.

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The Angling Council of Ireland is made up of the National Governing Bodies of the five colleges of angling namely Irish Federation of Sea Anglers, National Course Fishing Federation of Ireland, Salmon and Sea Trout Recreational Anglers of Ireland and the Irish Federation of Pike Angling Clubs . The ACI has developed a Strategic Plan which was adopted by all NGB to ensure the sport of Angling in Ireland will progress in line with the objectives of the Irish Sports Council up to 2015. Each angling branch has different requirements and commitments with most but not all being involved in competitive angling. Angling in Ireland is not only seen as a competitive sport, it is a life- long leisure activity for many, it is a source of employment and income for others and if properly managed and developed has the potential to make Ireland a world class tourist destination for anglers. Ireland has as many rivers as we have roads, we have a huge variety of fish species around our coastline, we have superb lakes with good facilities all within easy reach. We have the infrastructure to support the vast number of participants involved and have identified areas for improvement. Anglers and fish share many impediments to improvement in the aquatic environment many of which may be easily resolved through meaningful dialogue.
Anglers of all persuasions have long flagged the deterioration of the aquatic environment and of certain fish stocks. Over many years anglers have taken serious action to prevent certain disastrous consequences of mismanagement of the resource. Anglers have spent their own recourses to develop their local waters and to protect them from predation. Anglers have influenced regional and national thinking on the development of the resource, because anglers are part of the national fisheries resource. The Angling Council of Ireland will work with all those interested in maintaining and improving angling in Ireland and wishes to acknowledge the support given by Irish Sports Council.

We are on the web www.anglingcouncilireland.ie

E U Water Framework Directive

Four of these river basin districts are entirely in Ireland, one is entirely in Northern Ireland, and three are cross-border international river basin districts.

EU Water Framework Directive is an important piece of EU environmental legislation which aims at improving our water environment. It requires governments to take a new holistic approach to managing their waters. It applies to rivers, lakes, groundwater, estuaries and coastal waters. Member States must aim to achieve good status in all waters by 2015 and must ensure that status does not deteriorate in any waters.

The Angling Council of Ireland has nominated delegates from among the affiliated National Governing Bodies to represent them on the Angling Pillar of the Regional Advisory Councils.
The Salmon and Sea Trout Recreational Anglers of Ireland SSTRAI have nominated the following delegates Bob Seward, Martin Mc Enroe, Bob Wemyss. Paddy O Sullivan and Gerry Broderick.

TAFI have nominated Eamonn Moore as their delegate.

The ACI will host an information day for all appointed delegates to advise on the workings of the River Basin District Committees.

The Angling Council of Ireland will work closely with all regions to ensure we provide the best information and advice to the councils.

It is intended that delegates will report to the ACI on a regular basis and these reports will help keep anglers informed of the workings of the River Basin District Committees.

The Irish Specimen Fish Committee

Founded in 1955, the ISFC is an independent voluntary body, representative of angling interests in Ireland, whose principal function is to verify, record and publicise the capture of large (i.e. specimen) fish caught on rod and line by anglers in Ireland, both in freshwater and marine waters. The Committee also ratifies Irish record rod caught fish. The ISFC coordinates and administers the unique specimen awards scheme which is designed to recognize any angler who catches a specimen fish and to publicise the angling venue. Successful anglers are awarded a certificate and a commemorative badge. Specially commissioned silver medals are presented to captors of record fish and special awards are also made to captors of multiple specimen fish (on a cumulative basis). This report is a detailed listing of all particulars relating to specimen and record fish captures in Irish waters in 2009. Over 25,000 claims have been received by the ISFC over the past 55 years. This dataset is one of the most valuable and long-running time-series of its type.

Irish Specimen Fish committee Members 2009

Trevor Champ, Chairman, Dr. William Roche, Secretary, and Norman Dunlop (all Central Fisheries Board); Alan McGurdy, Steward McGrane (Game Angling), Orla Woods (Failte Ireland), Dr. Edward Fahy (Marine Institute), Dr Patrick Boylan (Loughs Agency), Dave Egan/Der Casey (Coarse Angling), Dr. Robert Rosell (AFBI) and Hugh O'Rorke (Sea Angling)

ISFC Chairman's Review 2009

It is sad to report that Irish angling lost three champions during the past year. Ned O'Farrell represented the coarse fishing fraternity on the ISFC for fourteen years. Throughout his life he worked tirelessly for anglers, tourist angling around Prosperous and his beloved Grand Canal. Hugh Gough, retired Coarse Angling Officer with the Central Fisheries Board, was extremely well-known in angling circles throughout Ireland, passed away in November. Holder of the current Irish record for rudd, Hugh surveyed numerous fisheries throughout Ireland and was a major force in establishing Ireland as a premier coarse angling destination. Dr Michael Kennedy, who passed away in October was a founder member of the ISFC, a committed angler this unassuming gentlemanly scholar obtained his PHD from UCC for his publication *The Sea Anglers Fishes*. He served for many years as the Manager of the Inland Fisheries Trust and, as Senior Scientist, he initiated research into the biology of many of Ireland's fresh and saltwater fish species. His long list of publications, many in association with former ISFC Chairman Dr. Paddy Fitzmaurice, is a testament to his pursuit of knowledge and understanding of the biology of the fish species on this island and their aquatic ecosystems. His publications are, and will remain for many generations, and inspiration to all fisheries scientists in this country and others beyond our shores.

This past year has probably surpassed both previous years with regard to wet summers and 2009 closed with exceptional rainfall in November that established new records at most locations around the country. Short term weather patterns, whether wet/dull/cloud or dry/sunny/hot, greatly influence angling conditions for different species and affect the variety and numbers of specimen claims submitted annually. Despite the poor summer it is good to report an increase in claims this year with one new record established.

For the first time fish length is being reported here together with weight. Length is recorded by most anglers but not on certified measures. The examination of weight/length relationships for sharks and rays was a primary focus for the ISFC in 2009 in order to attempt to develop robust systems to record these species. However, the replacement of weight as the main criterion to define a specimen is just not possible at this time but the ISFC will continue to further explore all possibilities in this regard. Regardless of the eventual outcome of these deliberations, record fish will always be reported by weight which is the universal currency of angling reporting but the "Conservation Species" length-based specimen award is a likely inclusion from 2011 onwards.

The Committee began a comprehensive review of specimen weights for all species in 2009. Specimen weights for several species have been reduced; these will apply from next year. Genetic fingerprinting of certain specimen fish species, which began in 2007, has enabled the Committee to include Roach x Rudd hybrids on the specimen fish listings from 2010 onwards. I gratefully acknowledge this fruitful deliverable from our association with scientists in UCD. Black Bream has also been added to the specimen list.

I have referred in previous review to unauthorised stocking of non-native fish species to new waters. There may have been a time when people did not understand the consequences of such introductions but sufficient biological evidence is now available which shows how native communities has been devastated in Irish waters post stocking. It is my belief that to persist with such irresponsible action, apart from contravening EU (the Water Framework Directive and the Habitats Directive) and national legislation, constitutes environmental vandalism of the worst kind. Nothing can be done to reverse the actions of our predecessors. Be assured that the ISFC does not in any way condone the misguided actions of some individuals or groups who continue to expand the geographical spread, either through the importation or translocation, of non-native and/or exotic fish species.

I am glad to welcome Mr. Der Casey as the coarse fish representative and I thank Mr. David Egan for his assistance in this role. The financial climate is impacting adversely on everybody in all spheres of life. We are, therefore, especially grateful to the various organisations and individuals who continue to provide financial support to the ISFC, in particular the Central Fisheries Board, the Marine Institute, Failte Ireland, the Loughs Agency, the Eastern, Southwestern, Shannon and Northwestern Regional Fisheries Boards. Without this support the ISFC could not function. I am especially grateful to the Committee members for their help during the year. Thanks to all of the boat skippers and anglers for your interaction during the year.

Trevor Champ Chairman

Fishing the Midlands by Martin Mc Enroe.

The midlands have much to offer Anglers of almost any persuasion, Lough Ree and the rivers Shannon, Suck, Inny and Brosna are recognised as the finest wild mixed fisheries in Europe.

Large wild brown trout are prolific on Lough Ree as are Pike, big ones! As can be seen in attached photographs of a resent pike competition held on the lake.

A lot of rehabilitation work has been done in the past number of years on the feeder streams in the Lough Ree catchment area. This work has proven to be very successful with trout stocks gaining yearly.

Coarse fish are abundant throughout the Region, the hot water stretch at Lanesborough Provides coarse fishermen with a great days catch, though the power station is closed for maintenance at present, it should not be long before it is up and running again.

The town of Athlone provides good stretches for coarse and pike fishing. The meadow stretch just south of Athlone town has for years provided coarse fishermen with good catches and has now been extended and upgraded for the use of disabled anglers.

There are also excellent fishing stands at Donamon in Roscommon, on the River Suck to facilitate disabled anglers with easy access and disabled toilets on site.

Unfortunately, salmon stocks are very low in the upper Shannon but the good news is that a program is now being put in place to bring the Salmon back. Working together on this project is the ESB, Shannon Regional fisheries board, a team of marine biologists and local angling clubs.

The problems in relation to obstacles that Salmon come up against on their journey up river to spawn have now been clearly identified by the group and funding has been sought from Europe to rectify these problems.

We are expecting a decision shortly from Europe and I will keep you informed.

Information, reports and activities can be accessed on the SRFB website: www.srfb.ie

If you require further information on any of the above please do not hesitate to contact me.

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Tight lines

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