

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Dear Member,

The 2011 season has opened successfully on the lower reaches of the Slaney, as the report in this newsletter indicates. This is in spite of unusually low water. We badly need a large flood to bring fish into the upper reaches. For the first time for a number of years there is optimism about the state of stocks among those who know the river well. Unfortunately we still don't have a full counter on the river. Slaney River Trust ('SRT') will be meeting shortly with Inland Fisheries Ireland, Clonmel and this and other issues will be a priority for discussion.

We organized a successful Seminar in Bunclody on March 5th with an attendance of over 80 people. A report appears in this newsletter. One of the main points I took away from the Seminar was Dr. Willie Roche's report that widespread electrofishing in the Slaney catchment in 2009 and 2010 recorded very respectable numbers of juvenile stock.

Compared to 2009, 2010 was a good year environmentally on the river. We had few reports of pollution. Water quality appears good. We are planning a kick sample survey later this year to check the strength of insect life in the river.

A major focus since the last AGM has been to advance the assessment of the feasibility of a rocky ramp fish pass at Clohamon. Our Director, Richard Burgess, has spent a great deal of time on this Project. You will find his report on this and other fish passage issues on the back page. Currently we are awaiting completion of a major report by fisheries consultant Alan Sullivan. It will be discussed with the various parties involved when it is complete. The report was prepared at the request of the Dept. (whose approval would be required if the Project is to go ahead) and was funded by Slaney River Trust. As part of the preparation of this report extensive discussions have taken place with the parties directly involved. Many measurements have also been made of flow rates / water levels. I would like to compliment all concerned on their input, negotiation skills and determination to solve problems as they arise.

We look forward to implementing over the next twelve / eighteen months some of the major recommendations put forward by Paul Johnston in his report - Review of the River Slaney Salmon Fishery with Proposed Measures for Conservation and Recovery – Stage Two. In this respect funding is always an issue. We are fortunate to have support from Slaney River Foundation and as the accounts for Slaney River Trust and Slaney Rodfishers Association show we have healthy cash balances. We would like to access more EU funds. Exploratory work continues on the LIFE programme and we will be investigating whether support might be gained from LEADER which from time to time funds fisheries related projects.

Over the last year, our Director, Brian Stephens, working with computer professionals, has made major improvements to our website www.slaneyrivertrust.ie. I would urge members with access to the internet to check the site regularly for Slaney news and general information of interest to salmon anglers. The webcam on the site - with real time information on water levels - has proved popular with members.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome to the Board two new Directors. Thomas Mernagh lives in the Enniscorthy area. He has a keen interest in the environmental aspects of rivers and has been fishing for salmon for a number of years. Dermot Page lives in Grangecon, Co. Wicklow. He runs the Rathcon recreational fishery and is a keen fisherman. Both new Directors are well qualified in environmental matters and bring much needed expertise to the Board.

With the river reopening this year, we have received strong support from members through renewal of subscriptions. I would like to appeal to those members who have not yet renewed to do so as soon as possible. At €35 p.a. it represents good value and includes valuable insurance cover. Subscriptions should be made out to Slaney Rodfishers Association and sent to: David Dobbs, Sundial House, Manor Avenue, Greystones, Co. Wicklow.

I hope to see you at the Annual General Meeting which is being held on Friday, 24th June in Bunclody.

yours sincerely

Vincent Duigan
Chairman

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SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS SLANEY RIVER TRUST SEMINAR

5th March 2011

Over 80 members of SRT and non-members attended. There were excellent presentations and a good discussion, after each, refereed by SRT Chairman, Vincent Duigan. Some of the key points follow.



Dr. Willie Roche, IFI, presenting at the Seminar

1. David Mc Inerney, Head of Inland Fisheries Ireland, Clonmel.

David explained that the Slaney was now in his area, since IFI was now based on river basin districts. His main salmon rivers are: Slaney, Barrow, Nore, Suir. The reason for the new IFI structure, replacing the old Fishery Boards, was driven partly by the need to reduce the number of board members and, mainly, to have one national organization with the same policies everywhere. Budget cuts have meant a severe cut in IFI's resources. The way business is done has changed. IFI will now concentrate on: synergies between districts, sharing of resources and information, business development and promotion of fisheries, tourism potential, closer collaboration with the private sector, especially River Trusts. In discussion after on David's talk, Vincent Duigan welcomed the move to more collaboration with River Trusts, which are very keen to engage with the public sector and 'put something back on a voluntary basis'. *Editor's Note* on River Trusts. The River Trust movement is well established throughout the UK and is now taking hold



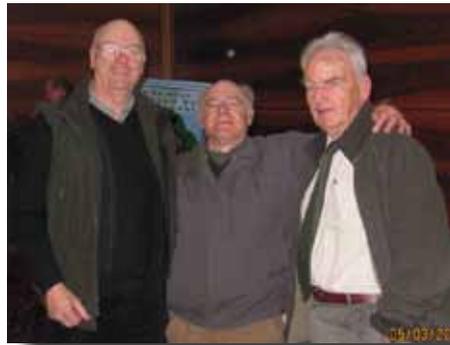
Vincent Duigan and Johnny Alexander

in Ireland. River Trusts involve the bringing together of local voluntary effort with public bodies to manage and improve the freshwater habitat guided by best practice. The movement follows a tried and proven path and allows the whole community to be part of river management. Apart from the Slaney, Irish river trusts are active on: Suir, Nore, Blackwater, Coomhola, Ballinderry R., Six Mile Water – and a number of other rivers are considering joining the movement.

2. Paul Johnston, Fisheries Consultant

Paul's report is part funded by IFI and also by Slaney River Foundation, for which we are very grateful. It recommends a series of projects which SRT is keen to promote, albeit some will require the availability of funding which is now quite difficult to access.

In his presentation Paul drew particular attention to the following points from his report:



Stuart Feeney, Jim Murphy & Billy Turner

- it was alarming that the Slaney Conservation Limit (3692 salmon) was achieved only once in the last ten years
- the major problem is poor marine survival. It is now around 1% for springers. If it got back to the 1980s figure of 2.5% there would be a harvestable surplus of 2000 fish over the Conservation Limit. *Editor's Note* – see below for better news on this front from Dr. Ken Whelan
- focus should be, short term on: maximizing spawning stock by nil exploitation, attacking poaching and seal / cormorant predation, habitat improvement / reduction of barriers to fish passage.
- In, addition, the Slaney seems behind other major salmon rivers in regard to full counter, smolt surveys, intensive scale sampling study, genetic analysis, GIS mapping of habitat. Key question – where in the system do springers spawn ?.
- Paul also highlighted the significant scope for River Trust involvement / community voluntary labour with IFI, Clonmel a form of Public / Private Partnership at a time when IFI's budgets are being scaled back.



Simon McCormick, Rory Keatinge

3. Eamon Cusack – Potential for Private Waterkeepers

Eamon is the former CEO of Shannon Regional Fisheries Board and is currently Special Adviser on Fisheries Management and Stakeholder Engagement to IFI. The main points he made were as follows:

- * IFI welcomes participation by individual anglers in fisheries protection by becoming Private Waterkeepers. There is a need for trained volunteers at a time when State budgets are under pressure.
- Private Waterkeepers were originally established in legislation in 1842. Their main powers today are: access to rivers and boats, check for licences, examine and confiscate nets and other illegal fishing engines, liaise with and report to IFI Fishery Officers / the Garda information on illegal fishing. They have no powers to seize illegally caught fish, search people and premises, or enforce the tags / quota system.
- Private Waterkeepers also have the right to seize legal fishing engines which are being unlawfully used eg strokehauls, rods used out of season or rods using banned bait
- a person who wishes to become a Private Waterkeeper must first apply to IFI for a Certificate of Suitability. There are a number of administrative requirements which are currently the subject of negotiations between angling clubs and IFI. The angling clubs wish to make them more user friendly. Once the Certificate has been issued application is made to the District Court for the issue of the Warrant.
- an important role of a Private Waterkeeper is to build up a relationship with local IFI staff, provide them with intelligence on illegal fishing and advise them of patrol plans to maximise resources.
- A copy of the full presentation is available on the Events section of www.slaneyriver-trust.ie

4. Dr. Willie Roche, Senior Research Officer, Inland Fisheries Ireland. (www.fisheriesireland.ie)

Willie's main points were:

- The Slaney salmon angling fishery was



Hannah Hamilton, Bob Wemyss and Niall Greene

opened on a Catch and Release basis for part of 2011 because of good juvenile salmon fry abundance determined from a catchment-wide electrofishing programme undertaken by IFI in Autumn 2010. Salmon fry abundance is regarded as a reasonable proxy for adult spawning activity and provides a quantifiable estimate of comparable abundance within and between catchments. Scientific monitoring of salmon status, using available indices, is central to the effective management of stocks and will also contribute to Ireland's requirement to report to the EU in 2013 on the state of our salmon stocks nationally. In 2010 a total of 86 sites throughout the Slaney were sampled. Results, expressed as the number of salmon fry per 5 minutes of electrofishing at each site, showed that the Slaney averaged 18 juveniles per site in 2010 with high values being recorded in many main channel sites. The national threshold figure to allow for opening on Catch and Release is 17 salmon fry/5-min which coincidentally was the mean value for 2009 and 2010 Slaney data combined. In national terms the Slaney was ranked 16th of 47 catchments sampled in 2009.

- In regard to predators, the Slaney is one of four Irish catchments being studied for cormorant numbers by Birdwatch Ireland for IFI under the Salmon Conservation Stamp Fund. Tenders were invited for a study on seal predation on salmon stocks in



Martin Kelly, Michael & Betty Hayes

the Slaney and the Moy systems and survey work is due to commence in Summer 2011.

- The Slaney is one of nine priority catchments being intensively studied under the INTERREG 4A/Ireland-Wales funded Celtic Sea Trout Project (CSTP). This international study into sea trout stocks in the Irish Sea will address many of the key questions about sea trout ecology at sea and the possible impacts of climate change on this fascinating but enigmatic migratory trout (www.celticseatrout.com). Willie, who is leading the sampling part of the programme, presented a detailed project background and update. At the juvenile stage sea trout and brown trout, which are the same species (*Salmo trutta*), are indistinguishable. Sea trout leave freshwater to go to sea as smolts, usually as two year olds about 16-20 cm in length, and benefit from better feeding, leading to faster growth and more egg production. The majority are females. This improved growth means that a 4 year old brown trout residing permanently in freshwater carries some 400 eggs but a large 4 year old sea trout could carry 7000 eggs. Some sea trout can spawn up to six times and can contribute hugely to production over their lifetime. However, going to sea exposes sea trout to greater risk from predators and parasites and places greater demands on their energy as they migrate into the sea, in before returning to freshwater to spawn.
- Anglers were thanked for collecting scales from the Slaney catchment in 2009 and 2010. This part of the project is critical to understand the timing of the runs, the size and age ranges of sea trout entering the system, their overall life history, their growth as well as providing samples for genetics and scale microchemistry. 2011 is the last year for collecting scale samples for the CSTP. To maximise understanding of sea trout in the Slaney it is essential that the required number of scale samples is collected. The target is 300 and 100 sets have been collected to date. This means that the target is 200 sets in 2011 so all SRT members who fish for sea trout are urged to help here. A valuable incentive scheme (top sampler will receive a €582 prize) has just been launched and full details are available from www.celticseatrout.com. See also this page

Full kits for scale sampling are available from the Celtic Sea Trout Project Officer John Coyne at IFI (Tel 01 8842600).

Fish can be returned alive after scales are sampled.

Photo credits: Ken Dodd

Valuable prizes for sea trout anglers in 2011

Sea trout anglers on the east and south coast of Ireland, the west coasts of Scotland, England and Wales and on the Isle of Man have an excellent chance to win one of the many valuable prizes on offer in a free prize draw by collecting scale samples from any sea trout they catch in 2011. The Celtic Sea Trout Project (CSTP) is incentivising anglers to take samples of scales from any sea trout they catch over the season in specific "priority" rivers.

The prizes are:

- A £500 (€582) tackle voucher prize to the angler submitting the most scale samples from any CSTP priority river in 2011.
- Three £350 (€407) tackle voucher prizes to each of the 3 anglers who return the most scales from priority systems in 2011 within each of other three regions: Ireland (inc NI), Scotland and IoM, Wales, or NW England
- Ten £100 (€116) tackle vouchers to be awarded to 10 anglers to be drawn at random from the remaining scale samples submitted. (this includes samples submitted in 2010 and those from non-priority rivers within the project area)

The winners will be chosen based on the scale samples submitted to us before 31st March 2012. The prize draw will take place on the 1st of April 2012. Winners will be contacted directly.



Slaney Fishing Report

Opening Week to 19th May 2011



Slaney Salmon of 9lbs successfully released - Strahart Fishery

Following a two year closure for salmon fishing on the Slaney anglers returned for the opening day last Thursday 12th May. The river is strictly Catch and Release this year. With low water levels prospects appeared to be poor. However, many fishermen were surprised with some excellent sport. The lower part of the river had a reasonable number of fish about but salmon were few and far between in the upper reaches, probably due to the exceptionally low water. In all it is estimated around 40 salmon were taken in the opening week, with most fish in very good condition and in weight averaging 8 to 12 lbs.

The opening day was a perfect day for fishing with cloud and a good westerly wind. Most anglers were equipped with a floating line and small flies. Anglers on Clobemon got off to a great start. Patrick McManmon was the first to land a salmon of 8 pounds while his father Sean hooked and played 3 Springers only to be denied by last minute gasps at the bank by all 3 of them. Eoghan Clear fishing the same beat had 4 good takes but again failed to land a fish. Perhaps the barbless single hooks might be to blame. Brian Stephens fishing on Tombrick (on the opposite bank to Clobemon) was doing his best to get into the action and managed to hook and land a beautiful fresh fish of 8 lbs later in the day. On the next beat up, John Carroll rose one fish five times but it never took hold. At Clohamon, Paddy Syme from Gorey was more successful. In a magical 2 hour spell Paddy landed 4 fish of 8, 9, 10 and 12 pounds, all taken in the same pool on a size 8 yellow shrimp fished on a midge tip line. David Dobbs also had good sport landing 3 fish of 8, 9 and 12 pounds, one taken on a Claret Shrimp and two on the Yellow Shrimp, also taken on a midge tip line. Paul Mosse from Kilkenny also had some excitement managing to tempt three fish but none held on. In the Enniscorthy area Jackie Byrne had five salmon to 18 lbs. Other fisheries along the river seem to be closed, probably due to the season opening so late while other anglers decided not to venture out due to low water.



Opening Day: Bill Mosse at Clohamon

Following opening day, fish continued to be caught. Those in amongst the action included Virginia Webb from England who had 2 fish for her weekend trip of 8 and 10lbs, Donald Ogilvy Watson had an 8 pounder, Daniel Dobbs had a 10 pounder and Tom Tynan also landed a ten pounder. Well known vet, John Ryan, from Tipperary had an 8 pounder and lost another, while his son, Dr. Jim Ryan, also lost a fish. Downstream Kevin Clayton landed two 9 pounders and Willie O'Connor had an 8 pounder. Johan Van Der Flier from Wicklow landed his first salmon, a magnificent 13 pound beauty, at Clohamon on a small yellow Allys Shrimp. Johan managed to land the fish, weigh it in his net, take a quick photo before returning the fish which he'll remember for the rest of his life.

Reports from Enniscorthy Bridge suggest that at least four salmon were caught, including a 9 lb. fish for Seamus O'Leary and one of 10 lbs. for Nicholas Carroll. At the Bridge there are quite a few fish coming in on each tide but they then follow the tide back to Wexford. All they need is a drop of rain and they'll be on their way to the Wicklow mountains. When it comes, make sure you are on the river as sport should be excellent.



David Dobbs: 8lb salmon at Clohamon

Week 2 to 26th May 2011

The Sunny South East has lived up to its reputation with no significant rain falling in the Slaney catchment in April or May leaving the river at a very low level for this time of year. Despite this, many of the fishermen who ventured out this week managed to land a Slaney Springer.

Not surprisingly, most of the fish were caught in the tidal area of Enniscorthy. It is estimated that 10 to 15 fish were caught and released at the bridge, all taken on prawns mounted on single barbless hooks (shrimp and prawn permitted from Enniscorthy Bridge down). Amongst the lucky anglers was George O'Connor who had an 8 pounder on Thursday while the day before 2 good fish were caught, one of 14 pounds.

Up river Francis Connolly had a 10 pounder and lost another at Solsboro while Anthony Walsh also had a 10 pounder at Riversdale. Paul Aisher, part owner of Clobemon had an 8 pounder for his 2 days fishing and Willie O'Connor had 2 fresh fish of 9 and 10 pounds on a small Silver Stroat taken at Strahart Fishery. On the same fishery Ian Fox had two on 25th May. Johan Van Der Flier, who had his first fish of 13 pounds during the opening week, landed another cracker of 12 pounds from the same pool at Clohamon on a Silver Doctor. Johan's father Dirk then managed to land his first ever salmon of 8 pounds. There is one correction from last week's report, Jackie Byrne had 4 fish and lost another on the opening day rather than landing 5 as previously stated. It was also reported that 2 salmon were caught on The Tullow Anglers water on the opening day.

Reports from Enniscorthy suggest there are good numbers of fish waiting to run the river and fishing up river could be excellent if the rain arrives. In the first two weeks it is estimated 65 saslmon were landed. For further information on the river Slaney and fishing availability log onto www.slaneyrivertrust.ie



Returned to the water

David Dobbs



Fishing Availability

Fishing on the Slaney is controlled by a variety of Angling Clubs, Syndicates and Riparian owners. Day tickets are available from the Angling clubs and occasionally from some Riparian Owners and Syndicates. A number of fisheries have chosen to remain fully closed for the 2011 season.

Anglers interested in obtaining fishing can enquire from the following:

Clohamon Fishery.

Contact David Dobbs on 087 9673111

Enniscorthy Anglers.

Danny's Bait & Tackle Shop Enniscorthy. Tel: 087 9005991.

Solsboro Fishing Association.

Association Secretary, Bernard Cash (daytime only)
Tel: 087 9225536.

Tullow Salmon and Trout Anglers Association.

Day tickets are available from:

John Duffy, Old Chapel Lane, Tullow Co Carlow.
Tel. 059 9152740

Ballintemple Fishery.

Contact Tom Butler on 059 9155037 or 086 8179238

Inland Fisheries Ireland – Hotline for incidents of poaching and pollution

Members are requested to use the IFI Hotline 1890 34 7424 to report incidents of poaching and pollution. This is a very quick and effective means to get vital information into the hands of IFI Fisheries and Environmental Officers.

Conservation Of Salmon And Sea Trout (River Slaney) Catch And Release Bye-Law No. 881, 2011.

1. This Bye-law comes into operation on 12 May 2011.
2. In this Bye-law -
“catch and release” in relation to angling for salmon and sea trout in the waters referred to in Article 3, means carefully handling any fish caught and immediately returning the fish alive to those waters;
“fish” means either salmon or sea trout or a combination of both;
“salmon” means fish of the species *Salmo salar* (Atlantic salmon);
“sea trout” means fish of the migratory form of *Salmo trutta*, but does not include a sea trout which is 40 centimetres or less in length measured in a straight line from the tip of the snout to the fork of the tail.
3. Notwithstanding Article 3 of the Conservation of Salmon and Sea Trout (Closed Rivers) Bye-law No. C.S. 306, 2010 fixing the annual close season, it is permitted for a person from 12 May to 30 September during the year 2011, subject to Article 4, to take by rod and line any salmon or sea trout from the waters of the River Slaney in the Wexford or No. 2 District by catch and release.
4. A person angling for salmon or sea trout in accordance with Article 3 shall not use or attempt to use worms as bait or any fish hooks, other than single barbless hooks.

21 April 2011.



River Slaney at Scarawalsh



General Salmon Background – Points Of Interest

1. Norway gets serious about control of salmon farming

On April 8 2011 the Norwegian Seafood Federation unveiled a 12 point plan. The main features of the plan are:

- salmon farm members have pledged to install sea lice filters at all their slaughter plants and on all their well boats by end 2012
- lice in salmon farm pens will be counted every week. A joint data base will be set up for the industry where medicine usage and resistance will be measured
- €26m. will be spent on research directed at sea lice. Short term projects will be undertaken for effective and environmentally friendly methods for lice treatment in 2011 and 2012
- from 2012 salmon will be tagged so that escapes that are caught can be traced back to the owner.
- A producer must pay € 64 per escaped salmon caught in rivers. Several other measures to deal with escapes.

The measures were welcomed by Norway's Directorate of Fisheries – 'a welcome change of tempo in the industry'

2. Report on Salmon Watch Ireland Seminar – 21 May 2011

Dr. Ken Whelan, Research Director, Atlantic Salmon Trust, gave a well received talk on the Salsea Programme. (research into salmon life in the oceans). **Of great interest to Slaney anglers will be the findings in respect of salmon caught off the coast of Greenland.**

These salmon were in excellent condition, their stomachs often stuffed full of shrimps, small fish etc. It is well known that spring salmon, including many from Ireland, migrate to Greenland. Ken pointed out twenty years ago Greenland salmon were in much poorer condition. It may be that climate change or just a change in the salmon cycle (which Salsea is trying to understand) has caused this shift. Since the Slaney opened this year many of the fish caught were in excellent condition, which bears out Ken's analysis. If the trend continues we can expect to see more and bigger fish returning to the Slaney. Further confirmation

comes from the generally excellent runs of springers into Irish rivers this year (see further on this on back page)



Tullow Anglers' Water at Aghade

Salsea has collected a vast amount of data eg scale samples for 15000 salmon and the stomach contents of 570 fish. 52 scientists are intensively analyzing this data currently. Their findings and the implications for fishery management will be presented at a Symposium in France next October and at a conference in London next December. The proceedings of the Symposium will be published as a special issue of the ICES Journal of Marine Science.

Dr. Fran Igoe gave a presentation on ' Water Quality – what can the Water Framework Directive deliver'. He pointed out that there has been a thorough collection of data as required by the WFD on all major Irish rivers. The aim is for Ireland to achieve good water quality by 2015. Many parameters are monitored: the chemical content of the water and ecological factors such as number of fish / invertebrates, hydrology, oxygen levels etc. 70% of Irish rivers are in good condition. The expected benefits for anglers from the WFD are: more and larger fish, better fish passage, improved spawning habitat and pleasanter fishing conditions.

Maura Walsh, of Integrated Rural Development Duhallow, gave a talk on Funding the Rehabilitation of Fisheries. She gave background on successful applications for funding under Leader and LIFE programmes and a possible new source of funding for inland fisheries under the European Fisheries Fund.

3. Return of the Kelts

An interesting programme studying the migration of kelts (previously spawned adult salmon returning to sea) is being carried out by Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) in partnership with Norwegian scientists. This programme involves radio tags being attached to kelts prior to release at sea. The programme is now in its second year and is providing some interesting data about adult salmon migratory routes which appear to be quite different to those taken by salmon smolts on their maiden voyage to sea. There is now research that suggests that recovered kelts make up 20% of the salmon run in some of our rivers. Amazingly a salmon has been recorded diving to a depth of .9 km (900m). More details can be seen on the Inland Fisheries Ireland website - news and updates link.

4. Letter from Orri Vigfusson to Minister Pat Rabbitte re reopening of Castlemaine Harbour mixed stock fishery



Minister Pat Rabbitte TD,
Dept of Energy, Communications and Natural Resources,
29-31 Adelaide Rd
Dublin 2

Reykjavik May 23, 2011

The decision to reopen licensed commercial fishing in Castlemaine Harbour has been brought to our notice. This is very worrying to us as it will send extremely damaging signals to all the countries where efforts are being made to restore wild salmon to historic abundance.

You may recall we met when we campaigned for the closure of the Irish drift net fishery with full compensation for the fishermen involved. That campaign lasted for fifteen years while governments led by Fianna Fail stood in the way. Each year ministers were forced to reinvent formulas to justify their refusal to act. They finally had to admit defeat in 2007 after it became clear that the drift net fishery was violating the EU Habitat Directive and the UN Law of the Sea, art. 66. Unfortunately, no less than 98 of every 100 salmon that our fishermen have allowed to return to you since 1991 have been killed in your draft and drift nets.

Meantime, the drift nets had killed several million wild salmon that had been protected and returned to your shores through the goodwill of Greenland, Iceland and the Faroe Islands, the nations that control the high seas feeding grounds.

I must remind you that over 90% of the biomass of your salmon is created outside your jurisdiction and outside the jurisdiction of the European Union. You should also be grateful that it is entirely due to the desire of the these northern nations to help bring about a full recovery of Atlantic salmon stocks that you still have salmon in Ireland.

We thought Ireland had learned that this is no way to treat fragile spawning stocks of wild salmon. You will not be surprised, therefore, that we are baffled and totally dismayed to learn that your country is again changing accepted scientific formulas to justify killing even more of the brood stock that we have preserved in northern waters. Your decision has evoked the disgust of our northern fishermen and infuriated international conservationists.

The appalling outcome of your decision is that at the NASCO meetings next week Greenland and the Faroe Islands will propose the reopening of their commercial fisheries. They, too, have many "science-based buyers" ready and waiting to buy their products. If they return to salmon fishing Ireland is likely to find quite soon that it no longer has wild salmon to misuse on fishmonger's slabs and your department will be to blame. As you should know, Iceland's conservation and restoration agreements with the Faroes and Greenland have saved the lives of between ten and fifteen million wild salmon and given these fish the chance to spawn.

This has worked extremely well for Iceland where salmon catches have increased 300% in the last decade. It has not succeeded in your country, the EU or Norway because you have killed and eaten virtually all the brood stock we have saved for you and the outcome could not be clearer. During the last 30 years the salmon stocks of Norway and the EU countries have dropped by 80%.

We understand that you have announced a consultation period. We urge you to use it to reconsider and reverse your decision before you do endless harm.

Yours sincerely,

Orri Vigfússon

NORTH ATLANTIC SALMON FUND - Skipholti 35, 105 Reykjavik, Iceland
Tel: + 354 568 6277 - Fax: +354 588 4758 - nasf@vortex.is - www.nasfworldwide.com

5. Seal / Cormorant predation

This predation has been identified as a major threat to salmon and sea trout on the Slaney. A major study, initiated by Salmon Watch Ireland, with representation from IFI and Birdwatch Ireland is underway.

The Slaney estuary is one of the sites chosen for the study. Counts of cormorants are currently being conducted on a regular basis. Encouragingly, the EU Commission has made clear that the management of cormorant populations is - within the terms of the Birds Directive - a matter for management by national governments.

The results of the study are eagerly awaited by anglers on the Slaney. In regard to seals the issues are more difficult but we understand an official count of seal numbers in the Slaney estuary will commence shortly - see photo to understand the magnitude of the problem.





FISH PASSAGE ON THE RIVER SLANEY

A. Connectivity of a River

The connectivity of a river, i.e. the ability of all fish species to move unobstructed up and down its full length, is now considered by fishery scientists to be one of the most important factors for fish survival in that river. Slaney River Trust aims to assist in restoring fish passage at the main weirs on the river to full potential and to ensure any future developments do not adversely affect fish passage and connectivity.

B. Weirs on the Slaney

In 2006 Slaney River Trust ("SRT") appointed fisheries consultant Alan Sullivan to assess the impact of the three main weirs on the river: Clohamon, Baltinglass and Tullow.

As mentioned in the Message from the Chairman, there have been many meetings with all the parties involved: Eastern Regional Fisheries Board (now IFI Clonmel), the Dept. of Agriculture and Fisheries, SRT, the beneficiaries of the hydro scheme, the fishery owner and the landowner, and Alan Sullivan.

At the request of the Dept. SRT commissioned a detailed report from Alan on all issues detrimental to fish passage at Clohamon, including proposals for improvement (principally the installation of a rocky ramp fish pass) and the costing thereof.

In relation to Baltinglass, Eastern Regional Fisheries Board considered the existing fish pass to be unsatisfactory and appointed Alan Sullivan to draw up plans for a rocky ramp there. Funds were ringfenced for this project but time ran out in 2010. The file is now with David McNerney, head of IFI, Clonmel. He is awaiting findings from the Office of Public Works and the Dept. in relation to flooding and 'in river' activity before the project can be given approval.

Clohamon and Baltinglass are the priorities. There are no current plans for the weir at Tullow.

C. Proposals for new Hydro schemes on the Slaney

SRT has been notified of two proposals. One at Aghade has had approval refused because of lack of information provided. Both IFI and the National Parks and Wildlife Service are expected to ensure that the guidelines for small scale hydro schemes are being adhered to before planning could be granted. The second hydro scheme proposal SRT is investigating is two miles above Aghade. As yet no planning application has been submitted.

Richard Burgess, BA, BAI. SRT Director.

APPROXIMATE NUMBERS FOR SPRINGERS CAUGHT TO DATE ON SOME IRISH RIVERS

Owenduff (Shean Fishery) - 69 ("best for many years") + Delphi - 145 (109 hatchery, 36 wild) + Drowes - 200 (mainly springers) + Galway Weir - 90 (70 springers, 20 grilse) + Moy - 700 + Ballisodare River - we don't have firm numbers but by all accounts they have had an excellent Springer season.

For the Moy there may be a small number of grilse in the totals. Overall, the Springer returns on these rivers are very encouraging.