

WISDOM: Stephen Byrne pointing out the tennis ball-sized stones that salmon prefer for spawning nests

Salm' sight on River Slaney

AN invitation to see Atlantic salmon in the act of spawning is a real privilege and one not to be refused.

Over 30 people, me included, visited the upper River Slaney last Saturday to see salmon on the spawning redds (gravel beds).

The event was organised by Brian Stephens, director, Slaney River Trust and hosted by Inland Fisheries Ireland officer Stephen Byrne with help from military man Ger Fogarty.

We witnessed from the bank, hen (female) salmon digging a nest with their tails in gravel beds where they lay their eggs.

Many had cock (male) fish close by, guarding them and keeping away other suitors. It was just magic to see — nature at its best.



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The 73-mile long River Slaney rising in the Glen of Imaal in Co. Wicklow is primarily a spring salmon fishery.

The main run comes in March and the fish are usually Multi Sea Winter fish (two years at sea), weighing between 9 and 11.00 lbs.

The odd 20 pounder, having spent three years at sea, also appears.

The river is recognised as one of our earliest spawning rivers with many fish spawning between November 7 and 21, hence the timing of this visit.

Full details are available at www.slaneyriver-trust.ie