

SLANEY RIVER TRUST LIMITED

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

MAY 31, 2013

Dear Member

In the period since the last AGM the Board of Slaney River Trust has been active on a number of projects which are described below. There will be a more detailed presentation at our AGM due to be held on Friday, June 28. Notice of the AGM and Accounts are included with this letter. I hope you will be able to come to the AGM. Dr. Willie Roche of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) will be presenting on a topic of great interest to Slaney anglers: update on the Celtic Sea Trout Project. This Project is a €2 million investigation into the sea trout stocks and fisheries of the rivers in Ireland and Wales which enter the Irish Sea.

Turning now to the projects we have been involved in during the last year:

1. Much work has been done on progressing the project for a rocky ramp fish pass at Clohamon. The purpose of such a pass is to improve fish passage on the river. IFI have indicated their support in principle for the project. IFI will decide soon whether to fund (under the Conservation Stamp Fund scheme) a consultant's report into the planning and design aspects of the project. Our Director, Richard Burgess, and I have committed much time to this project over the last year.
2. We have been monitoring several potential hydro schemes on the Slaney and certain tributaries to ensure they pose no threat to fish passage and that they comply with SAC regulations.
3. Our Director, Thomas Mernagh, and IFI supervised a project to improve spawning on the Clody R. above Bunclody by cutting back laurel, raking spawning gravels and removing in stream obstructions. The project was carried out last September by Boro Landscapes and Nurseries at a cost of € 9700, which was funded by the IFI Conservation Stamp Fund. IFI plan to do further work on the Clody in 2013 / 4 to remove weirs which are obstructing fish passage.
4. A very successful trip to the spawning redds in the Upper Slaney and the Glen of Imaal was organized on November 12 by our Director, Brian Stephens, in conjunction with the Defence Forces and IFI. Forty people took part. A number of spawning salmon were seen. IFI's redd count - at 1230 redds - was the second best result since 2001. It was marginally better than the 2011 result of 1182. However no count was made in the main channel due to high water. In 2011 the count included the main channel. This is very encouraging for the future of the Slaney salmon.
5. Brian Stephens is also webmaster of our website. He has continued to improve the site over the last year, particularly in the areas of regular updates on fishing conditions and catches, items of general interest to anglers and a listing of fishing availability on the Slaney. The website also has photographs of a number of fish caught this season and a summary of the last redd counts. There has been a lot of access to the webcam on the site - which displays water levels - during the last year by non-members of SRT. The Board of SRT is currently evaluating whether there should be a password so that only paid - up members of SRT can access the webcam, which represents a significant cost to SRT.
6. Slaney River Trust continually monitors the environmental condition of the river. Generally the river was in good health in 2011 / 2012. However Tullow Anglers are keeping a close eye on the sewage plant in Tullow where there have been some plant problems recently

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Incorporated in Ireland - Registration number 353361.

Slaney River Trust Limited has received funding from the ERDF through the Ireland/Wales Interreg 111A programme .

7. We have been in discussion with Carlow Co. Council regarding modifications they are proposing to the operation of the water abstraction plant at Rathvilly. They have commissioned consultants' reports on the two aspects involved: raising the height of the weir and treatment of water in the abstraction plant with alum. Our consultant, Alan Sullivan, is currently reviewing the two reports for us.
8. SRT wrote to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine last December setting out our views on why Bord Iascaigh Mhara's proposed deep sea salmon farm in Galway Bay should not be allowed to go ahead. The letter can be found in the 2012 Archives section of our website.
9. Our Director, Thomas Mernagh, was involved in two projects this month, representing SRT. On May 15, as part of IFI's Fisheries Awareness Week, SRT and IFI took 14 transition year students from the FCJ Secondary school in Bunclody to Clohamon fishery for a day's flyfishing lessons. Already some of the students have expressed keen interest in taking up fishing. On May 16 24 transition year biology students from the same school, who have been studying the Water Framework Directive, started a three year study of the water quality above and below the treatment plant in Bunclody. Kick samples were taken to test for water quality and the results analysed in the school's biology lab. The project is being sponsored by the Slaney River Foundation.
10. The rescheduled casting class took place at Clohamon on September 8. It was well attended and those participating enjoyed the day, benefiting from much one to one tuition by a team of casting experts led by Mark Corps of IFI. Mark will be running another class on Saturday 29 June at Clohamon. Notice of this has recently been sent to all members for whom we have email addresses.
11. Poaching of salmon on the Slaney is a major concern for SRT and IFI. There is evidence of much more poaching this year than last year. The poachers generally use spinners and kill every salmon they take. SRT has encouraged the taking out of private waterkeeper licences and a number are now being processed. We recently invested in a mobile 'poachercatcher' camera to catch offenders on photo. The camera will be moved around various fisheries during the season and will be moved to spawning areas during the spawning season. Unfortunately there is evidence of increases in poaching at that time. If any member has ideas on how poaching can be curtailed I would appreciate if they could contact me directly.
12. We have made contact with Enniscorthy Local Anglers, the fishing club set up, with IFI support, to regulate angling in the Enniscorthy Bridge Pool. Two of their representatives have attended recent board meetings of SRT. We see scope for co-operation with them in several areas. Their main concern is the level of seal predation in the Bridge Pool. At certain times of the year seals are present there on every high tide. A study of the seal population in the Slaney estuary commissioned by IFI is ongoing this year.
13. We maintain close contact with IFI and met with David McInerney (IFI's local Director who is based in Clonmel) on November 13 last to address a number of SRT's concerns. A note of the meeting is carried on SRT's website in the 2012 Archives.

Turning to salmon catches in 2013 to date, there has been an excellent run of spring salmon. Although we have not done a formal tally, probably of the order of 220 plus salmon have been taken on the rod. Many have been sea-liced and appear in excellent condition as the photos on our website will attest. A number of other salmon have been hooked and not landed, as also happened last year. Three salmon of around 20 lbs. have been caught and at least two of around that weight have been hooked and lost.

Finally, I would like to appeal to all members who have not yet paid their subscription to do so now by sending a cheque for € 35 to John Carroll at 7 Appian Way, Dublin 6. It should be made out to Slaney Rodfishers Association. Or you can use the Paypal facility on our website www.slaneyrivertrust.ie

Yours sincerely,
 Vincent Duigan
 Chairman