Angling Advisory Group (AAG)

Draft Minutes of Meeting – 19.08.2025

IFI Headquarters, Citywest, Dublin 24 & Remotely via Zoom

Attendees

Martina Hennessy (DCEE, Chair), Catherine McGinty (DCEE), Tom Tynan (Special Advisor to Minister Dooley), Suzanne Campion (IFI), Barry Fox (IFI), Fiona Kelly (IFI), Tom Collins (IFI Chair), Martin Kearney (NARRA), Bob Seaward (SSTAI), Martin Mc Enroe (ACI), John Drinan (TAFFI), Warren Doyle (EFSA), Noel Carr (FISSTA), Eamon Hayes (ICSA), Coilm McArdle (DCEE)

Online Attendees: Minister of State Timmy Dooley (for a portion of the meeting), Stephen Mc Quillan (Private Secretary to Minister Dooley), Fergal Bell (IFPAC).

Introductions

A round of introductions was completed, followed by an update on personnel changes and restructuring in DCEE since the last meeting.

Agenda item 1 – Adoption of Minutes of previous meeting October 2024

Minutes adopted.

Action Point: Draft minutes from 6th August 2024 meeting to be re-circulated to FISSTA prior to finalisation & the relevant [D/Housing] email address is passed on to all members of the AAG to enable them to engage in the [Marine Protected Areas] MPA process.

Agenda item 2 - Ministers welcome address to AAG (deferred to later in meeting)

Agenda Item 3 – Updates from IFI

Statement of Strategy

IFI stated that a 6-week consultation process will open shortly in relation to Statement of Strategy and encouraged all groups to have their say.

In response to a query, IFI indicated that it would be launched by end of November subject to Ministerial approval.

Western Lakes Management Plan

IFI will present the Western Lake management Plan to the IFI Board on 17th September. They hope to publish it very quickly thereafter.

IFI will open public consultations on Byelaw 806 & 809 before end of September.

Barriers Programme

IFI advised that 160 barrier projects had been submitted for consideration. Successful projects would be announced by end of September.

SSTAI welcomed the barriers project and congratulated IFI on same.

Agenda item 2 – Ministers welcome address to AAG

Minister Dooley thanked everybody for attending and stated his intention to attend at least one AAG meeting a year. The Minister noted the importance of angling in Ireland, particularly regarding tourism and social activities in local communities, and how he wants to engage further to understand challenges and opportunities in the sector.

In response to a query from ICSA on the 6-mile limit, the Minister advised this would be addressed under the new Policy Directive. He also noted the work being done under the Marine Planning Act and that the Marine Environment function would soon transfer into this Department from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage.

Queries were raised regarding angling within MPAs and also within areas where offshore wind farms are established. The Minister stated that a MPA does not mean an entire exclusion zone and some MPAs will be passible, but this will be determined by the science and likewise with wind farms. The Maritime Area Planning Act is built around the concept of the maritime area as a shared space with multiple users/access underpinning all decisions.

Regarding the Munster Blackwater fishkill, queries were raised regarding Marine Institute involvement and stated water quality issues were of high importance. Minister confirmed that IFI were leading the investigation and Marine institute's role was related to diagnostics on the dead fish. A preliminary report was expected to be issued by 28th August.

Some members expressed concern at the perceived conflict of interest in the Minister of State's responsibility for aquaculture and salmon conservation. Minister advised dual responsibility did not present a conflict and there are opportunities in having a single Minister with visibility on activity across all marine functions. Some concerns were also raised on impact of sea lice and introgression between escaped farmed and wild salmon populations and the recognition of scientific advice in this area.

A query regarding the appointment of a new CEO in IFI was raised and Minister confirmed he conveyed his formal approval this week to proceed with the competition to appoint a new CEO.

4 Agenda item 4 – Other Government updates

Article 55

DCEE advised that Article 55 comes into effect next year, with the EU App currently being developed. SSTAI stated recommended that data collected includes socio economic information to better enable adoption. A number of concerns with use of App were also noted - access to smart phones, training and age profile of anglers. SSTAI called on the AAG to assist in communications.

ICSA raised concerns on implementation of Article 55 with respect to charter boats and the recording of information. It was noted that education and training programmes would be required for all.

IFI shared the concerns off the group and stated that socio economic data would be useful data to collect. IFI will be happy to work with all members on this matter.

Some queries were again raised regarding a potential conflict of interest for the Minister of State in his current role with which covers fisheries and aquaculture. and a number of bodies raised issues regarding scientific research. The Chair asked that any relevant studies/papers be shared with DCEE. The Chair also noted that external experts could be invited to an AAG meeting to present research when relevant to topics under discussion.

Agenda Item 5 – AOB

Cong Hatchery

IFI informed the meeting that Cong Fishery would be closed before the end of the year. Stock is currently under review and IFI will keep the group updated on this.

Funding

SSTRAI are looking to be re imbursed for NASCO & European Angling Alliance meetings attended to the amount of €13013.68. DCEE will engage with SSTRAI on these repayments.

Sea Angling

ICSA put on record that there were no sea angling items on the agenda and also noted lack of support for charter boats and that facilities for charter boats was now a huge problem while SSTAI stated that any development works would need to consider proper embarking and disembarking for people with disabilities.

EFSA also put on record dissatisfaction that no Sea Angling items were on the agenda

Pollock

ICSA raised their raised their concerns regarding new proposals regarding a new daily limit of three pollock per angler.

AAG Chair

A query was raised regarding the Chairpersonship of this group and whether it should be on a rotating basis between all the members.

Action point - DCEE to review Terms of Reference and minutes of previous meetings

IFI CEO

A query was raised regarding the recruitment of a new CEO. DCEE stated PAS are running the recruitment process and that any candidate would have knowledge of information that is in the public domain.

Date of next meeting

The Chairperson proposed the next meeting to take place on 17th November at 11am.

List of Action Points and current position

Agenda Item	**Action**	**Status**
1 - Adoption of Minutes	Draft minutes of the 6th August 2024 meeting to be re-circulated to FISSTA prior to finalisation	Complete – circulated to FISSTA on 14/11/2025
1 - Adoption of Minutes	Relevant [D/Housing] email address is passed on to all members of the AAG to enable them to engage in the [Marine Protected Areas] MPA process.	Complete – sent to AAG members on 20/10/2025
5 - AOB (Change of Chair)	DCEE to review Terms of Reference of the group to see what was originally agreed.	Complete - reviewed with a view to discussion at next meeting