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**From:**  
**Sent:** Thursday 19 February 2026 10:55  
**To:** DCEE IFD Public Consultations  
**Subject:** Submission Re 2nd Proposed Salmon Regulations 2026  
**Attachments:** Submission Re 2nd Proposed Salmon Regulations 2026.pdf

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Dear Minister,

I wish to make the following submission in relation to the **2<sup>nd</sup> Consultation on 2026 Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme Regulations**, published 4 February 2026:

### **1. General Support**

The proposed regulations are to be broadly welcomed, given they assist conservation and limit the harvesting of salmon to the period June to August. This will encourage angling tourism outside the peak summer months. It will also encourage those with an interest in fishing rather than harvesting. Unfortunately, the proposals will continue to discourage angling tourism during the peak summer months.

### **2. Common Estuary Castlemaine**

The common Castlemaine estuary includes salmon destined for the river Maine, which has no estimated surplus. In accordance with fundamental conservation measures, there is zero justification for any form of commercial netting in the Castlemaine estuary, targeting salmon destined for the rivers Maine, Laune and Caragh.

### **3. Commercial Netting**

Unfortunately, where commercial netting continues, e.g. Kerry, serious anglers will not contribute to rural economies during the period June to August:

- Salmon numbers are at an all time low.
- Summer months are increasingly noted for low rainfall & low river levels, leaving salmon vulnerable to netting operations in estuaries and coastal areas. With estuary nets operating four days per week, serious anglers will not waste time and money visiting such locations. For example, the Laune may have a large allowable catch but all are aware that the lion's share will be taken by nets in the months of June and July. Tourism and rural economies are the losers.
- The June / July netting season coincides with the closure of schools for summer, when children should be encouraged to engage in outdoor pursuits. Where commercial nets operate, children have little opportunity to catch a salmon and quickly lose interest.

The initial Public Consultation Report notes that a significant number of submissions were received from commercial licence holders, with many expressing "concerns at the future viability of commercial operations." A number of these submissions also referred to the possibility of a voluntary buy-out scheme.

Given there is little prospect of a significant improvement in salmon stocks and/or the viability of commercial operations, perhaps the time is right to explore the possibility of a buy-out scheme - but only if any scheme is accompanied by a reduction in allowable catch for any remaining operators. There is no conservation logic to buying the licence of one operator only to reassign the quota to other operators.

A successful buy-out scheme would serve several purposes: facilitate the concerns of commercial operators, assist conservation, promote rural tourism and boost rural economies.

In the absence of a buy-out scheme, alternatives to boost conservation, tourism and rural economies include:

- Reduction of netting operations from four days per week to two days.
- A shorter netting season.
- Suspension of all commercial operations.

#### **4. Summary Comments / Recommendations**

- Proposed regulations are to be broadly welcomed.
- Where commercial netting continues, the proposed regulations will do nothing to encourage angling tourism during the peak summer months.
- Basic conservation requirements dictate that there is no justification for any form of commercial netting in the Castlemaine estuary.
- Introduce a shorter netting season and/or reduce netting operations from four days per week to one or two days.
- Explore the possibility of a buy-out scheme for commercial operators - but only if any scheme is accompanied by a reduction in allowable catch for any remaining operators.
- Ban all harvesting of wild salmon for the foreseeable future.

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