

From:
Sent: Thursday 26 February 2026 11:30
To: DCEE IFD Public Consultations
Subject: FW: River Boyne closure to Salmon fishing

FYI

Kind Regards,

From:
Sent: Thursday 26 February 2026 09:26
To:
Subject: River Boyne closure to Salmon fishing

Hi ...
I didn't get to chat with you last night, so here is an outline of my query on behalf of / and Meath.

I am writing on behalf of ... nt and member of several River Boyne angling clubs ,as he is deeply concerned about the proposal by Inland Fisheries Ireland, based on TEGOS scientific advice, to fully close the River Boyne under the draft Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Regulations for 2026.

He tells me the decision to close it to Salmon fishing is not a minor regulatory adjustment. It is a significant national and local decision.

The current public consultation closes at 5.30pm on Thursday, 5 March 2026, which leaves very limited time for meaningful engagement before the regulations are finalised.

The Boyne is currently operating under Catch and release which the IFI notes on your website leads to almost 100% survival rate. They argue that once rivers move to full closure, they rarely if ever return to active management.

Full details of their concerns are included below, however, they have asked me to seek clarification from you and the IFI on the following:

1. What evidential basis was used to reclassify certain rivers between drafts in the absence of updated scientific advice.
2. Do the IFI have sufficient resources to deter poaching and identify pollution once anglers are removed from the river Boyne
3. Why a regulated catch and release fishery, which IFI itself promotes as highly effective, being closed when there is no evidence closing a river improves outcomes
4. How the repeated calls within the consultation process for greater transparency in decision making were addressed before the second draft was issued.

They say closure spells the complete abandonment of the River Boyne and means:

Poaching increases

Without anglers acting as daily eyes and ears, pollution and illegal fishing activity increase. Any salmon caught by poaching by either rod or net will be killed

Habitat declines

Closing the river undermines local angling clubs whose long-standing volunteer work supports habitat protection and partnership conservation efforts.

Funding Declines

Licence fees, permits, and conservation funds will collapse with the Boyne being a dead river. IFI resources for protection and rehabilitation move elsewhere

Political Influence Weakens

A river without an active angling community loses representation and engagement with the community accelerating long term decline.

Closure Ignores the Real Causes of Decline

Marine survival, salmon farming, rising temperatures, pollution, climate change, habitat degradation and badly designed weirs (such as Balmoral) drive the crisis. None are solved by shutting the river to Catch and release angling

That makes the abandonment of the Boyne a critical decision that requires careful examination before it proceeds.

There have now been two attempted drafts of the regulations. The IFI took the unusual step of pausing the first draft and issuing a second, and a number of rivers changed status and quota allocations between drafts without any detail of why while the Boyne remains marked for closure

Confidence in these regulations depends on confidence in the underlying science from TEGOS. If outcomes can change without new published evidence or rationale, then either the original assessment was not definitive or the revised decisions are not strictly evidence led. In either case, greater transparency and explanation are required for the river Boyne

Members fully support strong conservation where it is clearly justified and catch and release on the Boyne has their full support

Key concerns regarding closure:

No clear case against Catch and Release

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Nothing in the scientific advice or consultation report shows that full closure produces better outcomes than regulated catch and release. IFI themselves state on their website that catch and release is an effective conservation measure and that survival can be close to 100 percent when carried out properly. It is therefore unclear why an approach they publicly promote is considered detrimental to the Boyne.

Uncertainty treated as certainty

TEGOS data relies on the partial fish counter at Blackcastle, Incomplete logbook returns (48% in 2024) , and stretched IFI ground resources providing samples in order to make decisions. This report is neither independantly validated or peer reviewed.

Climate

Low water levels, high temperatures and temporary fishing closures have become increasingly common in recent years and restrict both migration and angling access. Lower fish counts under these conditions do not automatically indicate stock collapse and angling effort is almost nil during these hotter spells.

Closing a river is abandonment

Full closure removes lawful presence from the banks. Anglers are often the first to report poaching, pollution or habitat damage and provide visible deterrence. Without that presence, oversight weakens and problems become harder to detect leading to situations like the Blackwater fish fill in 2025.

Clubs decline, voluntary habitat work slows and local engagement declines. **Conservation depends on people who care about the river being on the river.** Protection comes from engagement, not absence

They are seeking to meet with me tomorrow (Friday), so if you would like more time to provide a response, let me know and I will try to reschedule.

Kind regards

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AN PÁIRTÍ POBLAICHTA



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