The Angling Advisory Group (AAG)

Draft Minutes of Meeting – 15.01.2026

IFI Headquarters, Citywest, Dublin 24 & Remotely via Teams

Attendees

In-person Attendees: Martina Hennessy (DCEE, Chair), Catherine McGinty (DCEE), Barry Fox (IFI), Milton Matthews (IFI), Lorraine ODonnell (IFI), Martin McEnroe (ACI), Bob Seaward (SSTRAI), Warren Doyle (EFSA), Noel Carr (FISSTA), Luke Aston (ICSA), Martin Kearney (NARRA), John Drinan (TAFFI)

Online Attendees: Fergal Bell (IFPAC), Paul Byrne (IPS), Brian Whelan (IFSA)

Introductions

A round of introductions was completed by all attendees

Agenda Item 1 – Adoption of previous Minutes

Draft minutes from 6th August 2024 were adopted.

Some changes to the minutes from the last meeting on 19th August 2025 were requested. Amendments will be made and minutes recirculated for adoption at next meeting.

Action Point: DCEE to update August 2025 minutes and re-circulate to the Group.

Agenda Item 2 – AAG Terms of Reference

Chair recommended a review the Groups Terms of Reference (ToR) and requested that a small sub-group comprising DCEE, IFI and a few other members would be convened to progress this.

There was a discussion on the need and merits of this review, with some noting that a significant amount of work had been done to get the existing ToR approved and all groups signed up. Several members noted issues including the rotating Chair and fractured relationships with DCEE and IFI.

There was also some discussion on the overlap with the National Inland Fisheries Forum (NIFF) and whether both groups could be amalgamated or held on the same day to reduce

travel and costs for members. It was noted that the NIFF had not convened for some time and DCEE undertook to review the status of the forum.

Chair noted the concerns raised and advised that this would be an operational review of the existing arrangements rather than a full redraft and was necessary to make the Group more effective and the meetings more constructive. This would also provide clarity on the issues raised.

NARRA, IPS, SSTRAI & ACI agreed to participate in this sub-group.

Action Point: 1) DCEE to circulate link for current TOR to group. 2) DCEE to convene sub-group to review TOR. 3) DCEE to review status of the NIFF

Agneda Item 3 – Updates from Inland Fisheries Ireland

IFI updated the Group on a number of items:

New angling support position

Lorraine O'Donnell will take up a new position, dedicated to supporting angling.

Statement of Strategy

IFI's Statement of Strategy was approved on 9th December and has been published on the IFI website.

IPS put on record that individual stakeholder meetings never happened regarding Statement of strategy and such engagement should take place.

National Barriers Programme

A second call of funding for the Barriers Programme will close on 16th February 2026, which follows the 103 projects totalling €13m announced in the first call last year.

Western Lakes Management Plan and Byelaws 806, 809 and 561

The public consultation for three byelaws:

1. Conservation and Prohibition on Sale of Coarse Fish Bye-Law No. 806, 2006
2. Conservation of Pike Bye-Law No. 809, 2006
3. Transfer of Live Roach Bye-Law No. 561, 1973

was now complete. Over 200 submissions were received and are under review by IFI.

The Western Lakes Management Plan has been updated to take account of comments received during the public consultation process. The review of the byelaws will also inform finalisation of the Plan.

Action Point: Presentation on Western Lakes Management Plan and Byelaws to be considered for the agenda at a future AAG meeting.

CEO

The recruitment process, managed by the Public Appointments Service, is ongoing and an appointment will be made in due course.

Agenda Item 4 – Updates from the Department

DCEE updated the Group on a number of items:

2026 Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Regulations

The Department received a significant response to the public consultation on the draft Regulations, with 326 submissions being received. A consultation report has been prepared and will be published shortly. The Minister will now take time to consider the stakeholder feedback.

In response to questions on licences being sold in December, DCEE confirmed that the existing Regulations remain in effect and any licences issued would continue to operate under the existing regime until new Regulations were signed.

ICSA expressed its concerns at the impact delayed signing of the Regulations would have on angling tourism. DCEE noted that this was recognised and would be looking at the process and timings in making regulations for future years.

FISSTA stated it has a paper going into the Minister on this matter.

EU Recreational Measures for Pollack

An EU proposal on fishing opportunities for certain fish stocks for was approved at EU Fisheries Council in December, in which it was provisionally agreed that there will be a maximum limit of 3 pollack per fisher per day. No start date has been agreed yet.

ICSA said this decision will have huge economic effects on businesses and noted the lack of consultation on the matter.

Article 55

The angler app has now gone live and is being rolled out Member States on a phased basis. There is no planned start date for Ireland yet.

SSTRAI stated there were potential positives from this measure but also noted issues such as compliance and use by certain groups such as disabled persons, that may impact angling.

ICSA asked for a lead in period for the app while EFSA said huge consultation was needed on this. IFI said they would engage with all sea angling groups.

Item 5 – Grant Funding

On foot of a 2024 claim totalling €12,724 received from the ACI, an amount of €5,517.63 was noted and approved as eligible for reimbursement. DCEE advised that the current funding agreement had expired, and a new one would be required for any further payments.

FISSTA asked that their objection to this payment be noted in the minutes.

Action Point: DCEE to review funding arrangement and a draft agreement to be brought to a future meeting.

Item 6 - AOB

Sea Angling

A few issues were raised by EFSA:

- 2023 Strategy for Future Development of Sea Angling has disappeared. DCEE advised this was a policy paper prepared for inclusion in the National Inland Fisheries Policy Statement, which is currently on hold.

- Meeting between ACI and CCMA (relating to shore competitions and risk assessments) was never organised. This primarily applies to Wexford and Mayo Co Co's.

- Signage to be erected on south coast / west coast (fish and baiting)

- No feedback received on the Coastal Marine Protected Areas (MPAs)

- Asked whether IFI would oppose the new injunction prohibiting trawling activity within the six nautical mile limit, which will impact sea angling

- A Coastal Assessment on sea angling has never been completed

- Has been locked out of IFI's Grant Application portal

- Questioned why blue fin tuna was subject to protection and conservation measures in Ireland but was available for competitions in neighbouring countries

Action Point: DCEE noted that some of those matters were outside the remit of the Department and IFI but will consider list and see what items can be progressed and if it's appropriate to invite other parties to present at future meetings of this group.

Hatcheries

IFI advised that Cong Hatchery is currently being wound down and will be closed in the 1st quarter of 2026. An update was also provided in relation to Roscrea and Bridgestock Hatcheries.

Next Date

Date of next meeting was confirmed as Thursday 16th April 2026 at 11am.

List of Action Points and current position

Agenda Item	Action	Status
1 - Adoption of Minutes	DCEE to update August minutes and re-circulate to the group	Complete
2 – Terms of Reference	DCEE to circulate link for current TOR to group	Complete
2 – Terms of Reference	DCEE to convene sub-group to review TOR	
2 – Terms of Reference	DCEE to review status of the NIFF	
3 – Updates from IFI	IFI briefing on Western Lakes Management Plan to be included on the agenda for a future meeting.	
6 – AOB (Sea-Angling)	DCEE and IFI to review list of issues and assess what issues can be progressed	