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From:
Sent: Monday 2 March 2026 17:13
To:
Subject: Wild Salmon & Sea Trout Tagging Scheme (Amendment) Regulation and Conservation Measures 2026
Attachments:

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Anglers are surprised and angry that the Department of Climate, Energy and Environment has ordered a new Public Consultation (PC) on the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme for 2026 so soon after the first one finished on 20th of December last.

The first PC was launched on the 21st November last by the Department of Climate, Energy and Environment (DCEE) and 326 valid submissions were received from various stakeholders, including angling federations, angling clubs and individual anglers up to the closing date of 20th December.

On or before the 3rd of February the DCEE published a report and summary of all the valid submissions received. The report stated the following under paragraph 4.10, Pressures beyond angling.

"Respondents broadly agreed that angling activity is only one of many pressures affecting the sustainability of stocks and highlighted a range of environmental and ecological factors which they considered as having a significant impact on salmon and sea trout stocks. Many submissions highlighted the role of habitat degradation, including barriers to fish migration and loss of spawning habitat. Water quality issues were also frequently referenced as key pressures affecting fish health and survival. Climate related impacts also featured highly, with respondents noting rising water temperatures, altered flow and an increase in the number of weather events as having an impact on spawning success, survival and migration. Aquaculture activities, including operation of marine fish farms, was referenced in a large number of submissions. Respondents expressed concerns regarding potential impacts on wild stocks, including sea lice and the interaction between farmed and wild fish, and called for greater consideration of these factors in fisheries conservation and management. Predation also featured highly as a contributing pressure, with many submissions noting the impact from increasing populations of predators, particularly seals and cormorants."

4.11 Socio-economic impacts

"Submissions emphasised the importance of salmon and sea trout angling to many local economies, particularly in rural areas and highlighted the contribution that angling activity has on tourism, employment and small businesses. Many expressed concerns that the proposed measures would have negative impacts on communities, particularly those with a reliance on angling. It was noted that angling or river closures could affect numbers visiting and club income.

Submissions also referred to the social and community aspect of angling and its role in supporting well-being and mental health and in maintaining cultural and local heritage. While acknowledging the need for conservation measures, respondents also emphasised the need to consider the socio-economic impacts alongside environmental and conservation objectives. Many called for a balanced approach that recognises the role of angling in supporting local communities and for greater assessment of implications on those communities in future decisions."

The report also stated in Paragraph 5 that "The Department now intends to further analyse the submissions and review the scientific evidence to inform the finalisation of the Regulations. Draft Regulations will be issued for further public consultation to allow stakeholders to comment further before any new measures are finalised".

Yes, the Department and IFI did analyse and review the submissions and decided that the first draft regulations would be scrapped and that we would revert back to the 2025 regulations and that "Salmon quotas, closed, catch and release rivers and bye laws remain the same as in 2025 while the Department considers the views expressed in the Public Consultation as part of the process to finalise the Regulations, which is expected to be completed in the new year". (IFI website)

Imagine our surprise and anger when the DCEE in conjunction with IFI announced on the 4th of February a second Public Consultation on the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme (Amendment) Regulations and Conservation Measures 2026, just a number of days after they published the Public Consultation Report for the first PC.

Anglers believe that the announcement so soon after the first PC, which closed on the 20th December is an act of bad faith by the Department and IFI as we were led to believe that we would be fishing under the 2025 regulations which did not involve the unnecessary closure of many rivers and total Catch and Release for salmon on others, including the Corrib system. A lot of anglers bought their 2026 salmon angling licences on that understanding. As one angler said on social media, It's a bit like the Lisbon Treaty. Keep going until you get the result you want and don't worry about what the people want.

These new draft regulations contained in the second PC, recommend C&R on all rivers from the 1st February until the 1st of June. From the 1st June anglers will be allowed to harvest 7 salmon until 31 August but September will again be C&R.

These new regulations include the Corrib system as IFI have miraculously discovered 1162 salmon for harvesting in the Corrib which is surprising, given the fact that IFI said in the first PC that the Corrib system was only reaching 99% of its Conservation Limit in 2025 and that no surplus existed for harvest. Is this another miracle of the loaves and the fishes without the loaves?

We have a situation at the Galway Fishery where no bookings are being taken or no fishing permits issued until the second Public Consultation is over on the 5th March and the new regulations are signed by the Minister. As a result Galway Salmon Weir anglers and local High Bank anglers are not allowed to fish until the Minister signs the regulations sometime in March, meanwhile anglers all over the country are allowed to fish since the 1st of February.

Why couldn't the Department and IFI just leave us with the 2025 regulations for this season as we were led to believe by the DCEE and have another Public Consultation after the angling season finishes in September which would allow time to have all fish counters working properly and a proper

scientific analysis of all rivers to determine the true size of salmon populations in our rivers. That would have been the right and proper thing to do but then again when did the DCEE and IFI ever do the right and proper thing in relation to saving our wild salmon and sea trout from extinction. They continue to use the anglers as scapegoats for the decline of our salmon and sea trout stocks while doing nothing to address the real causes of that decline, namely salmon farms, draft netting and predation by seals, cormorants, Pike and other coarse fish.

Catch and Release (C&R) does not work because if it did, rivers that had C&R imposed on them 20 years ago would not still be on C&R or proposed to be closed in the new draft regulations, the river Boyne is a perfect example.

What's the point of closing approximately 69 rivers and introducing Catch and Release on all of the rest when wild salmon smolts have to run the gauntlet of sea lice infestations and disease from salmon farms all along our South and West coasts, IFI scientific research proves that this is true.

said on the DCEE website on 21 November, that "The long term sustainability of our wild salmon and sea trout is my foremost concern, and I am committed to ensuring that our regulatory framework supports their protection." As Minister Dooley is also minister for salmon farms, he now has a choice to either shut down the salmon farms and issue no new licences or let our wild salmon and sea trout continue on the road to extinction. The choice is his.

Salmon farms have been removed from waters in British Columbia, Canada, all between 2018 and 2021 and salmon returns increased within a short number of years after their removal. I have attached a copy of a submission from [redacted] PhD Adjunct Professor, School of Environmental Studies, University of Victoria, Canada Associate Faculty, Royal Roads University which he sent to [redacted] J, salmon farm licence renewal application T05/122-4. I believe that this is a very important letter to [redacted] / as it shows the value of removing salmon farms from our waters and as a result, increasing our wild salmon populations and saving them from extinction. If it can be done in Canada, it can also be done here in Ireland. End

Yours sincerely,

[redacted]

