



Agenda Item 8.1
For Information

Council

CNL(13)25

***Annual Report
on Actions Taken Under Implementation Plans***

EU - UK (Northern Ireland)

CNL(13)25

Annual Report on actions taken under Implementation Plans for the Calendar Year 2012

The Guidelines for the Preparation of Implementation Plans and for Reporting on Progress, NSTF(06)10, indicate that the primary purpose of the annual reports is to provide a summary of all the actions that have been taken under the Implementation Plan in the previous year. In addition, details of any significant changes to the status of stocks, new factors affecting stocks, any changes to the management regime in place, and any changes to the Implementation Plan should be included in the report. Details of actions taken in accordance with Articles 14 and 15 of the Convention are also needed by the Council.

Please provide the following information to the Secretariat by 5 April 2013

Section 1: Details of any significant changes to the management outlined in the introduction to the Implementation Plan.

None

Section 2: A description of any significant changes in the status of stocks and information on catches. The Council has asked that the following information on catches be provided:

- (a) the provisional catch of salmon in tonnes for 2012 – **8.8 tonnes**
- (b) the confirmed catch of salmon in tonnes for 2011 – **10.4 tonnes**
- (c) an estimate of unreported catch in tonnes for 2012 – **0.2 tonnes**
- (d) the number of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries in 2012 – **5014**

Section 3: A description of any new factors which may significantly affect the abundance of salmon stocks.

Marine survival of salmon to the R Bush in NI remains very low and consistent with other NASCO jurisdictions, it is the major factor affecting abundance in NI populations.

No commercial fishing for salmon took place in the Foyle area in 2012 and angling on the River Finn was restricted to catch & release only.

Four commercial coastal salmon licences were issued in 2012 in the DCAL area, however by agreement none of the fishermen fished their nets. A small commercial catch was taken in fresh water in the DCAL area, with a total of 20 salmon taken in 2012 season. Overall for UK NI this represented a continuation of a very significant reduction in licensing of commercial salmon fishing engines in 2011.

Provisional data suggest a significant increase in rod catch in the Loughs Agency area in 2012 compared to 2011. Declared rod catch data in 2012 was 6,142. Note part of the Loughs Agency area is in the Republic of Ireland. The number of rod caught salmon killed in the DCAL area was considerably down on the 2011 figures due to a significant uptake in the voluntary catch and release by anglers.

Whilst monitoring data indicates that implementation of the UK NI Salmon Management Strategy (Implementation plan) is conserving and re-building stocks in fresh water, this management activity remains against a background of low marine survival relative to before 1997. Thus, reduced exploitation and freshwater habitat management measures can only buffer that decline. This being the case the Minister for the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (DCAL) again asked anglers to operate a voluntary catch & release for all rod caught salmon in the 2012 season in the DCAL area. Provisional data indicates that there was a 62% catch & release rate for anglers in 2012 compared to 22% in 2011.

A public consultation exercise was carried out in July 2012 to canvas views on salmon conservation in the DCAL area. After consideration of this the DCAL minister made a statement to the NI assembly on salmon conservation in December 2012 and indicated that a) legislation would be brought forward in 2014 to impose a mandatory catch and release for all salmon caught by anglers where rivers have not met their conservation limits b) that there would be a cessation of all commercial salmon netting in the DCAL area until stocks recover to a sufficient level.

Section 4: An account of all actions taken under the Implementation Plan with regard to the management of salmon fisheries; habitat protection and restoration; aquaculture and related activities; and other influences affecting salmon abundance or diversity (including the marine environment).

Management Action	Reporting Update	Achieved Management Action (Yes, No, Ongoing, Completed)
Fisheries Management		
DCAL Area		
Voluntary cessation requested of the 6 coastal salmon commercial fisheries	No coastal commercial fisheries operated in 2012. The option of a permanent buyout remains in place.	Completed
Recommendations for additional pre cautionary fishery conservation regulations (nets & rods)	Public consultation in July 2012	Completed
DCAL minister outlines conservation measures for salmon to be brought in 2014	11 th December 2012 statement made to the NI Assembly	On going
Ban on the sale of rod caught salmon	Draft legislation in place to be approved before June 2013	On going

Promote catch & release with anglers	DCAL minister again personally called for a repeat of the voluntary catch & release of all rod caught salmon in the DCAL area for the 2012 season.	On going
To develop conservation limits for DCAL rivers	Upper Bann & Moyola rivers completed	Ongoing
To refine and model data from the adult counter on the Lower River Bann to provide an escapement into the basin	Acoustic tracking carried out for salmon trapped at Portna on the lower river Bann in both 2011 and 2012 and assessments made of migration to upstream tributaries	On going
Loughs Agency Area		
Declarations for 2012 under the 2010 legislation	Catch & Release on the Rivers Finn and Foyle.	Yes
	Suspension of commercial salmon netting in the Foyle catchment	Yes
	IBIS INTERREG IVA research programme (12 PhD and 34 Masters projects – some of which are focussed on salmon: eg radio tracking of adults, it is intended to extend this in 2013 and also acoustically tag migrating smolts).	On going
Habitat Protection and Restoration		
DCAL Area		
Habitat Restoration and Enhancement projects	<u>Tempo river</u> : Improvement to complete habitat units comprising -pool, nursery and spawning habitat on a 1 km section of river <u>River Bush</u> : Improvement to spawning habitat on a 0.7 km section of river by removing weeds and adding gravel <u>Glendun River</u> : Improvement of spawning gravel in the middle and upper stretches of the river <u>Shimna River</u> : Introduction of gravel to spawning areas upstream	Completed
Local management area action plans implementing River Basin Management plans under the EU Water Framework Directive.	Four plans finalised	On going
Habitat Protection	Carrying out of enforcement patrols to detect unauthorised illegal river works	On going
	Provision of advice for river works carried out by both government	On going

	and non government agencies to ensure protection of salmon stocks & habitat	
	Provision of advice for Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) water abstraction sites to ensure river continuity and the safe guard of salmon moving upstream & downstream	On going
	Provision of advice for NIEA water discharge consents to safe guard salmon population and habitat	On going
River Stocking Programmes	Salmon fry reared for the Glendun and Clady rivers	Completed
	Review of salmon stocking on the River Bush	Completed
Loughs Agency Area	Issuing of Section 46 for extraction of in river substrate monitoring for works without necessary permit	On going
	Provision of advice to government and non government agencies to ensure protection of salmon stocks & habitat including river continuity and safe guarding of salmon moving upstream and downstream	On going
	Draft policy of stocking developed by AFBI for Loughs Agency	On going
	IBIS study on impact of barriers to salmon migration and another study investigating potential for impact of small scale in river hydros	On going
Aquaculture and related activities		
DCAL Area		
Management of 1 salmon farming operation	Research on interaction with wild stocks and sea lice monitoring is consistent with recommendation of FAR review group and was commenced in 2012	On going
Stocking Policy	Maintain policy guidance based on the Williamsburg resolution	Yes
Other influences affecting salmon abundance or diversity (including marine environment)		
DCAL Area		
Supportive breeding programmes	Erne catchment (whole catchment programme) Clady River Glendun River	Yes

Strategic Marine Management	Setting up a DOE Marine Division bringing together marine responsibilities from NIEA, Environmental Policy Division and Planning	On going
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Section 5: Details of any proposed revisions to the Implementation Plan.

The 2008-13 implementation plan outlined a timetable of DCAL rivers on which habitat surveys would be conducted and Biological Reference Points (BRP'S) established. Most of the main rivers outlined in the plan have been completed on schedule during the 2008-13 period including all the Lough Neagh tributaries and most coastal rivers. A number of potential salmon rivers, however, are outstanding and these have been prioritised and scheduled for derivation of BRP's during the next UK (NI) implementation plan 2013-18. These rivers include principally the Agivey, Glenarm and Kilkeel rivers.

Section 6: Information on the number of salmon that escaped from salmon farms (both freshwater and marine facilities) in 2012.

The Council has asked that information be provided on the number of farmed salmon reported to have escaped from salmon farms together with an estimate, if available, of the number of escaped farmed salmon that was unreported.

Numbers of escaped farm fish trapped at the Bush in 2012 = 0
 No reports were received of any salmon that escaped from the salmon farm in NI and there is no estimate of unreported escapes.