Council

CNL(18)19

*Update on Irish studies on Socio-Economic
Values of Atlantic Salmon in 2018 / 2019*

(Tabled by European Union – Ireland)

ESRI Survey on Salmon Conservation in Ireland – Overview

Inland Fisheries Ireland is currently running a programme in partnership with the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) of Ireland examining a variety of topics relating to angling in Ireland. The ESRI has recruited a panel of over one thousand Irish anglers who have volunteered to participate in angling related surveys. The ESRI launched its survey on salmon conservation on April 26th, 2018. The survey will provide useful information to those involved in fisheries management including Inland Fisheries Ireland and angling representative bodies across a number of areas:

1. Data on anglers' views across several salmonid conservation options (e.g. bank stabilisation, barrier removal, etc.) will provide insight on anglers' preferences for conservation options but more importantly the appetite among anglers for implementing additional conservation measures.   It will illustrate preferences between types of conservation measure (incl. lower bag limits), as well as a measure of the scale of those preferences (i.e. anglers preferences for low, medium, high levels of intervention). The survey will also provide information on anglers' willingness to share in the cost of such measures, i.e. to contribute to the cost of individual conservation items. The specific conservation items considered in the survey are barrier removal, bank stabilisation, pool restoration, as well as bag limit controls. All these items are potentially within the controls of anglers and stakeholders (i.e. IFI, etc.) so the research examines interventions that are feasible to salmon stakeholders rather than preferences for aspirational measures outside of the control of salmon stakeholders.

2. Anglers' views on different types of licensing options, in particular, whether there is interest among anglers for catch & release only licences (i.e. zero tags) versus the regular licence; plus investigating preferences for district-only versus all districts licences; as well as season long licences versus licences of shorter duration (e.g. 7 day licence). Examining anglers' views on licence area (district / national) or duration (annual / 7day / 1day) are of interest in the context of licence administration but where this research will provide significant new insight is the issue of catch and release licences. This is potentially the first time (in Ireland at least) of examining the appetite among anglers for a catch & release-only type licence, which essentially examines anglers' preferences for voluntary versus mandatory licences. It is important to note that this is not an either / or scenario on catch & release versus regular licences from a management perspective but understanding the potential level of support from anglers for such a measure.

3. The survey will also provide updated information on salmon anglers' costs (expenses involved in fishing). This type of information will be enable updated estimates of the value of salmon angling to anglers plus the local financial benefit. Similar to the sea-bass paper just published we should also be able to investigate the interaction between

catch and effort (e.g. how higher numbers of catch affect number of fishing trips). While this type of information has been previously collected it is the first time that a survey has focused solely on salmon anglers, which should facilitate greater accuracy surrounding the associated estimates. What is novel in this survey compared to previous game angling research in Ireland is that information on effort, as well as catch, is being collected and the research will be able to examine how catch rates, for example, effects the effort levels and associated economic impact.

The methodology behind items #1 and #2 above is a well-established, internationally recognised survey approach called "Choice Modelling". Choice modelling is used across a wide number subject areas including environmental and fishery topics. The method is particularly useful at capturing respondents' views on complex issues where there are multiple interweaved dimensions and allows researchers to understand the relative importance of each dimension. Item #3 entails the estimation of a 'demand' function via 'travel cost' methodology, which also has a very long history in recreational fishery economic studies.

The survey is being administered online to a panel of recreational anglers. The survey commenced on 26 April 2018 and preliminary reports from the survey will be available during summer 2018.