



Agenda item 7.1
For information

Council

CNL(18)30

***Annual Progress Report
on Actions Taken Under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2017***

EU – UK (Northern Ireland)

CNL(18)30

Annual Progress Report on Actions taken under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2017

The primary purposes of the Annual Progress Reports are to provide details of:

- any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the Implementation Plan;
- actions that have been taken under the Implementation Plan in the previous year;
- significant changes to the status of stocks, and a report on catches; and
- actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention

These reports will be reviewed by the Council. Please complete this form and return it to the Secretariat **no later than 29 March 2018**.

Party:	European Union
Jurisdiction/Region:	UK (Northern Ireland)

1: Changes to the Implementation Plan	
1.1 Describe any proposed revisions to the Implementation Plan <i>(Where changes are proposed, the revised Implementation Plans should be submitted to the Secretariat by 1 December).</i>	
None	
1.2 Describe any major new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation and management that you wish to highlight.	
None	

2: Stock status and catches.	
2.1 Provide a description of any new factors which may significantly affect the abundance of salmon stocks and, if there has been any significant change in stock status since the development of the Implementation Plan, provide a brief (200 word max) summary of these changes.	
Salmon returns improved significantly in the DAERA area in 2016 and expectations were high for the 2017 season. However the 2016 increases were not sustained in 2017 and salmon numbers returned to the levels observed in previous years. For example the total count of salmon on the largest river in the DAERA area (Lower Bann) was 15936 in 2016 but this fell back to 8433 salmon in 2017 which was similar to the previous 5 year average of 7538 salmon (2012-16).	
In the Loughs Agency Foyle area, the results were mixed for the four rivers with Management Regulations and which are assessed using fish counters results. The Roe continued to exceed its MT while the Finn as in previous years did not attain MT and after	

some years of increases experienced a drop in numbers. The Mourne did attain its MT, after adjustment for fish crossing the weir and not passing through the counting channel, while numbers were down on previous years, this may in part be explained by high floods which were experienced and subsequent difficulties with counter operation. This was likely to be a minimum estimate. Flood events damaged the counting site was inoperable on the River Faughan for a large part of 2017 and so no data is available.

2.2 Provide the following information on catches:(nominal catch equals reported quantity of salmon caught and retained in tonnes ‘round fresh weight’ (i.e. weight of whole, ungutted, unfrozen fish) or ‘round fresh weight equivalent’).

(a) provisional nominal catch (which may be subject to revision) for 2017 (tonnes)	In-river	Estuarine	Coastal	Total
	2.75 t	0	0	2.75
(b) confirmed nominal catch of salmon for 2016 (tonnes)	4.5t	0	0	4.5
(c) estimated unreported catch for 2017 (tonnes)	0.1t	0	0	0.1
(d) number and percentage of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries in 2017	DAERA area 1365 (93%) Catch & Release Loughs Agency 1794 (50%) - This is a provisional estimate and will be confirmed in the 2018 return.			

3: Implementation Plan Actions.

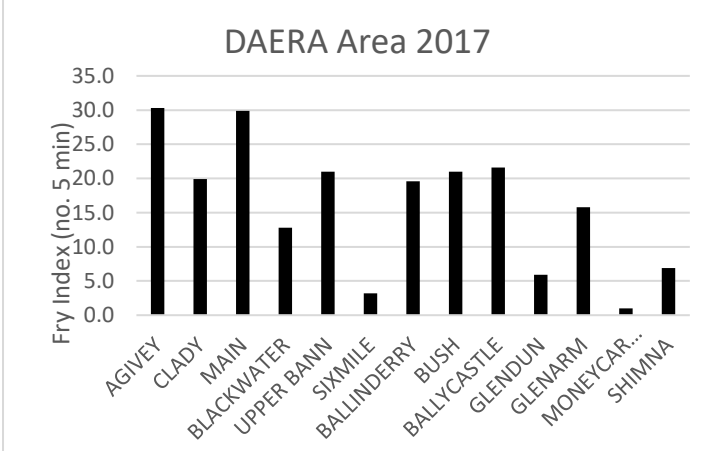
3.1 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to the Management of Salmon Fisheries (Section 2.8 of the Implementation Plan).

Note: The reports under ‘Progress on Action to Date’ should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.

Action F1:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Management and control of mixed stock commercial fisheries.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Legislation in place preventing any commercial mixed stock fishery when any contributing stock is below MT.
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	NI salmon stocks assessed and scientific advice on mixed stock fisheries provided for 2017 season. No mixed stock commercial fisheries to operate in NI in 2017. No commercial salmon fisheries have operated in the DAERA area since 2012. No commercial salmon licences have been issued since 2010 in the Loughs Agency area
	Current Status of Action	Completed
	If ‘Completed’, has the Action achieved its objective?	YES
Action F2:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Management and control of recreational fisheries.

	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Legislation in place to prevent the recreational exploitation on primary salmon rivers where stocks are below MT.
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	NI salmon stocks assessed and scientific advice on recreational fisheries provided for 2017 season. Four salmon rivers opened with harvestable surplus in DAERA area in 2017. In the LA area all rivers were open with a harvestable surplus in 2017 except the River Finn (cross border catchment) which remains as catch & release
	Current Status of Action	Completed
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	YES
Action F3:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Management and protection of vulnerable MSW stocks.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Reduced exploitation and mortality of MSW component.
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	DAERA area – Mandatory C&R of salmon on all rivers (except Lough Melvin – a cross border catchment) before 1 st June. In the Loughs Agency area the main MSW fishery is the cross border river Finn which is subject to catch & release only and has been since 2010. MSW fish exploitation is allowed in the remainder of the LA area but is subject to a maximum allocation of 5 tags per angler for the retention of either salmon or sea trout over 40cm
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F4:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Setting & monitoring conservation limits and management targets for salmon rivers in NI.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	To set an MT and provide an annual assessment of compliance with CLs for all primary salmon rivers to assist with the effective management and exploitation of those stocks.
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	All primary salmon rivers in NI have been surveyed (habitat assessment) and CL's established.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F5:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Long Term Monitoring of Salmon Stocks in an Index River (R Bush) for NI

	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Long term dataset of adult returns, smolt migration, stock recruitment data, freshwater survival, marine survival, biological characteristics of the R Bush stock.
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated)</i>	All the datasets completed in 2017 and annual survival metrics determined for the Bush salmon stock. For example the smolt run in 2017 was 18,479 fish. The total adult return of wild salmon to the Bush river in 2017 was 912 fish & marine survival rate of 1SW salmon was 3.8%
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F6:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Fin-clipping and coded-wire tagging of reared salmon.
	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	All reared salmon to be readily identified from wild fish and removed to be incorporated into the captive breeding programme.
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated)</i>	In total 4907 1+ age class hatchery smolts Coded Wire Tagged & Fin clipped In total 5029 2+ age class hatchery smolts Coded Wire Tagged & Fin clipped A further 25474 1+ age class hatchery smolts were fin clipped A further 22261 2+ age class hatchery smolts were fin clipped
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F7:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Assessment of riverine and inshore survival of salmon smolts
	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Acoustic telemetry studies of smolts on the River Bush and other target catchments to assess riverine mortality and identify possible areas of significant losses
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	99 Wild River Bush smolts were acoustically tagged in 2017 as part of the EU/NASCO Smoltrack project
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F8:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Improving recreational catch returns and statistics
	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Development of electronic recreational licencing and catch return system.
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of</i>	New system fully online in 2017 with digital licensing in the DAERA area with an e mail catch returns facility in place.

	<i>progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	LA introduced an e licencing system in 2017 with online catch returns
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F9:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Monitor recruitment of 0+ age class salmon in all primary salmon rivers in NI.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Annual monitoring of 0+ recruitment in all primary salmon rivers.
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	Semi-Quantitative electric fishing surveys were completed on all primary salmon rivers in the DAERA area of N. Ireland (see figure below). 
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F10:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Fishery protection and enforcement activities
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	To protect salmon stocks by detecting, deterring and disrupting any illegal activity directed at damaging or removing salmon stocks
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	Organised patrols (on land and water) are carried out in both the DAERA and LA areas to deter, disrupt and detect illegal fishing activities. In 2017, 1594 patrols were carried out in the DAERA area no detections were made re the illegal capture of salmon. However 3 illegal nets were seized and any illegal caught salmon were released unharmed. In addition 39 inspections were carried out on commercial premises where salmon can be sold. In the Loughs Agency area in 2017, 25 successful prosecutions were made. 31 illegally captured salmon taken and 142 seizures were made.

	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	

3.2 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to Habitat Protection and Restoration (Section 3.4 of the Implementation Plan).

Note: The reports under 'Progress on Action to Date' should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.

Action H1:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Licencing, best practice advice and monitoring of hydro-electric installations.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Maximum possible consideration of fisheries and ecological issues in licencing for hydro schemes.
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	Procedures are in place to ensure Fisheries are consulted during the application process for Hydro Electric Abstraction Applications. The Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) set the licence conditions including abstraction volume and a higher Q value is used for salmonid rivers to provide additional protection during abstraction periods. The NIEA is currently reviewing its guidance for "run of the river" hydro schemes. A joint compliance assessment programme has been established to regulate hydro schemes to ensure fisheries are protected during operation. Three priority catchments have been identified based on Fishery interests focusing on 16 Hydro Electric Abstraction Licences for compliance assessment. In the DAERA area 41 inspections were carried out at hydro sites to ensure compliance with fisheries legislation
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action H2:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Mitigating the impact of drainage maintenance schemes on salmon habitat.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Ensure sensitive / mitigated engineering solutions & seek opportunities to restore and enhance salmonid habitat within the impacted stretch
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	Fisheries advice was provided on the proposed works to ensure protection of fish stocks and habitat at the sites for the 2017 river drainage maintenance works programme in both the DAERA and Loughs Agency areas.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action H3:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Management and control of water quality in salmon producing rivers in NI.

	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Protection against degradation of salmonid habitat through pollution or waste disposals
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	NIEA also carried out approximately 1900 investigations in relation to reports of water pollution in 2017. Further actions were taken as appropriate. There were 7 incidents in 2017 which fish were killed. All discharges are regulated and fisheries advice is provided on them as part of the planning application process. Please note data has not yet been finalised for 2017. In 2017 the Loughs Agency investigated 256 incidents in their area with no major fish kills were recorded.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action H4:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	To improve connectivity of salmon rivers in NI.
	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	To gather information and carry out surveys to identify potential barriers to fish passage in primary salmon rivers in NI subject to resources. Where opportunities are identified and the necessary resources / permissions obtained to mitigate and reduce the number of barriers.
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	A weir was removed in the Colin river (tributary of the River Lagan) in 2017
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action H5:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	To protect salmonid habitat against illegal impacts.
	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Reduction in illegal alterations of salmonid habitat. Increase education and awareness of stakeholders and wider public on the negative impacts of habitat loss for salmon stocks.
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	Organised patrols (on land and water) are carried out in both the DAERA and LA areas to deter, disrupt and detect illegal activities including the unauthorised removal of material from the river bed. Operational patrol targets are set and monitored and the numbers of detections are recorded in each area. In 2017 in the DAERA area one detection were made re the illegal removal of river bed material. Any proposed removal of material from the river bed requires an authorisation. In 2017 the following applications were received and assessed for permission to remove material from the

		river bed - DAERA area 66 & and LA area 145 Section 46/47 applications for consent. These included road developments, bridge repair works, flood protection measures and erosion control. Note where this has a detrimental impact on fish stocks permission to remove the material is not given.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action H6:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	To produce an overall inventory of current and potential salmon habitat on primary salmon rivers in NI.
	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	To have surveyed all the major salmon rivers within NI and to have salmon habitat inventory data on a GIS database. To help identify and prioritise subsequent habitat enhancement actions.
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	All primary salmon rivers in DAERA & Loughs Agency areas have been surveyed and added to GIS inventory
	Current Status of Action	Completed
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	YES
Action H7:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	To enhance degraded habitat on salmon rivers in NI.
	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	To support and provide advice for habitat enhancement schemes on salmon producing rivers in NI including both from government and stakeholder resources.
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	The following works were carried out in 2017: DAERA area – Glenshesk River – 4 holding pools, some deflector groynes to improve channel sinuosity Clady River - 80 tonnes of spawning gravel Tree planting on the Upper Ballinderry river catchment to reduce silt input Unfortunately ground conditions were too wet to get any further works carried out, but some other habitat improvement schemes have been drawn up for completion in 2018.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	

3.3 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics (Section 4.8 of the Implementation Plan).

Note: The reports under 'Progress on Action to Date' should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.

Action A1:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Monitor sea lice levels in a wild salmon stock in N. Ireland.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Annual assessment of sea lice levels on adult salmon returning to the River Bush
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	Sea lice infestation levels were monitored in the returning adults on the River Bush. In 2017 a total of 1 524 adult fish were assessed for lice infestation levels, compared to 1 692 in 2014, 1 658 in 2015, and 3 332 in 2016 respectively. In 2017 96% of fish had no sea lice, with 3% low to moderate and 1% moderate to high levels of sea lice infestation. For 2016 these figures were 91%, 6%, and 3%, for 2015 92%, 4%, and 4%, and for 2014 96%, 3%, and 1% respectively. It appears that sea lice infestation levels in the River Bush returning adults have shown a decline in recent years compared to the figures reported in Ensing et al 2014. Reported for 2012 were 74% of fish with no lice, 12% low to moderate and 15% moderate to high levels of sea lice infestation, and 90%, 5%, and 5% respectively for 2013.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action A2:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Monitor for escapee aquaculture salmon in a wild salmon stock in N. Ireland.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Escapee aquaculture salmon are monitored annually at the River Bush trap.
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	No escaped aquaculture salmon were reported from the River Bush trap in 2017.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action A3:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Monitoring sea lice levels in aquaculture salmon in N. Ireland.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	An annual assessment of sea lice levels of sea cage reared salmon in N. Ireland
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g.	Summary of Northern Salmon harvest reports showing prevalence of <i>Lepeophtheirus salmonis</i> observed.

<i>website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>						Number	
	Date	No. Of fish Checked	No. Of positives (total lice seen)	No. Of positive fish	Percent age fish infecte d	1	2
	21/02/18	489	23	21	4.3%		
	10/01/18	380	47	38	10		ma
	01/11/17	310	2	2	0.6	max	
	25/10/17	235	1	1	0.4	max	
	20/09/17	300	1	1	0.3	max	
	30/08/17	297	1	1	0.3	max	
	26/07/17	311	2	2	0.6	max	
	21/06/17	281	7	5	1.8		ma
	17/05/17	355	5	5	1.4	max	
	26/04/17	354	6	6	1.7	max	
	29/03/17	340	3	3	0.9	max	
22/02/17	309	5	5	1.6	max		
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing					
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?						
Action A4:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	Monitoring levels of genetic introgression of aquaculture salmon into wild stocks in NI					
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP)	Triennial assessment of levels of genetic introgression of aquaculture salmon into wild stocks adjacent to the sites for salmon aquaculture in NI					
	Progress on Action to Date (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	2018 is an assessment year for the levels of genetic introgression of aquaculture salmon into wild stocks adjacent to the sites for salmon aquaculture in NI. Results will be available in mid-2018 and will be reported on in the NASCO Annual Progress Report 2019					
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing					
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?						

4: Additional information required under the Convention	
4.1	Details of any laws, regulations and programmes that have been adopted or repealed since the last notification.
None	
4.2	Details of any new commitments concerning the adoption or maintenance in force for specified periods of time of conservation, restoration and other management measures.
None	
4.3	Details of any new actions to prohibit fishing for salmon beyond 12 nautical miles.
None	

4.4	Details of any new actions to invite the attention of States not Party to the Convention to matters relating to the activities of its vessels which could adversely affect salmon stocks subject to the Convention.
None	
4.5	Details of any actions taken to implement regulatory measures under Article 13 of the Convention including imposition of adequate penalties for violations.
None	