

North-East Atlantic Commission

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*Information from the EU on Developments in Salmon Management
by EU Countries*

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Finland

- Management of Atlantic salmon fisheries in Finland is based on bilateral agreements between Norway and Finland, as both of the Finnish salmon river systems running to the Atlantic Ocean are border rivers with Norway.
- Tourist angling in these rivers is regulated by regional fisheries authorities in Finland and Norway.
- Management measures are based on salmon stock monitoring carried out in cooperation by Finnish and Norwegian research bodies.
- Disinfection procedures have been established in 2002 for each location selling salmon fishing licences in an attempt to prevent the dispersion of *Gyrodactylus salaris*.
- There are attempts to improve the quality of the salmon catch statistics, e.g. actions have been taken to improve the accuracy of the register of local people involved in fishing for salmon.

Germany

- Initiatives have been taken to re-establish salmon populations in the River Elbe since 1994 and River Rhine since 1998 which had highly productive salmon populations up to the beginning of the 19th century. Restocking has been carried out using Irish and Swedish strains in the Rhine and Elbe respectively.
- Several million Euros are being spent on this restocking and associated habitat surveys and enhancement in a carefully planned programme being implemented by the German Federal State (Bundesländer). These measures involve close coordination with other associated programmes (e.g. Rhine 2020 and landscape restoration programmes), leisure and tourism activities and organisations such as the International Commission for the Protection of the Rhine.
- These activities also involve cooperation with neighbouring countries such as the Netherlands where there is an agreed moratorium on salmon catches in the Dutch part of the Rhine and its estuary and the Czech Republic where there is restocking of Czech tributaries of the Elbe.
- Other smaller but important restocking and habitat restoration programmes are being carried out in the Ems and Weser rivers which also flow into the North Sea.

Ireland

- Under the EU-supported Tourism Angling Measure (TAM 1995-1999) € 15.6 million was spent on freshwater habitat improvements.
- 2,000 km of salmonid rivers and streams were surveyed and rehabilitation was carried out on 400 km.
- 22 fish counters have been installed on significant salmon rivers over the past 6 years.
- A comprehensive fish counter implementation programme has been designed and will be implemented in 2002. This will support future scientific advice relating to conservation limits.

- Recent management measures include the introduction of a comprehensive carcass tagging and logbook scheme for the commercial and the recreational rod fishery. The system has the dual benefits of reducing the level of unreported catch and simplifying the identification of illegally caught salmon.
- A National Salmon Commission representing all of the stakeholders was set up in 2001 to advise the Government on the management and conservation of salmon, in particular schemes relating to carcass tagging and TACs.
- Through its Scientific Committee, the Commission has available for the first time, scientific advice on conservation limits for the 17 fishery districts in Ireland in 2002.
- This scientific advice formed the basis for the introduction of TACs for the commercial fishery in each of the 17 fishery districts which has been put in place in 2002.
- It is intended to refine the scientific model over the coming years to provide the best possible basis for future management decisions.
- There is now no commercial fishing on early running spring salmon and in 2002 anglers were limited to one salmon per rod day up until June 1st.
- A ban on the sale of rod caught salmon was also introduced in 2001.

Spain

- The management of salmon stocks in Spain is administered in two parts, i.e. marine and aquaculture, and river fisheries and stock management.
- Marine fisheries and aquaculture are managed by the marine authorities. As there is no marine fishery for salmon there are no specific regulations in place.
- Aquaculture production is between 200 and 300 t per year and this is all based in Galicia.
- The management of aquaculture is vested with the Regional Governments and specifically to the marine fisheries.
- The management of the stocks and rivers fisheries is the responsibility of the environmental authorities, the Regional Government which is coordinated by the Central Ministry.

Sweden

- Fishing with drift nets has been banned since 1993 and salmon fishing is not allowed outside four nautical miles from baselines.
- Nets with mesh size less than 100 mm (diagonal) are not allowed in coastal waters of less than 3 m in depth.
- New regulations introduced in 2001 alter the opening and closing dates of the fishery from the last day of February to the 15th of September. The new season opens on the 31st of March and ends on the 1st of October.
- A comprehensive monitoring programme for *Gyrodactylus salaris* in wild salmon rivers was started in 2001.

UK (England And Wales)

- Salmon Action Plans have been completed for over half of the 68 principal salmon rivers in England and Wales. The consultation process reviews stock and fishery status (including the use of conservation limits), identifies factors limiting performance and lists a series of costed options to address these. The Final Plans

contain agreed actions which must be addressed within 5 years and provide refined salmon conservation limits. Salmon Action Plans should be completed for all principal salmon rivers by 2003.

- Twelve rivers have been designated as Special Areas of Conservation for salmon under the EU Habitats Directive. All consents affecting these rivers, including abstractions and discharges, will therefore be reviewed by 2006, and amended if necessary by 2010.
- Nationally, £2 billion is being spent to improve water quality in all rivers and estuaries over the period 2000-2005, directly or indirectly benefiting fisheries, including salmon.
- Fishing regulations in England & Wales are not revised annually. All previous restrictions remain in force. They include a national byelaw, preventing netsmen from taking, and in most cases, fishing for salmon before 1 June and requiring all rod-caught salmon caught before 16 June to be released.
- Measures to phase out the mixed stock coastal fisheries, as fishermen retire or surrender their licences, have continued. Negotiations to accelerate the phase-out of the north east coast drift net fishery, by compensating fishermen that surrender their licences early, have continued, with the offer of pump-priming funding from the Government.
- One new Net Limitation Order was introduced, reducing the number of licences in the River Tavy seine net fishery from 5 to 1. Arrangements were also made to reduce netting effort in nine other salmon fisheries (on the rivers Tavy, Tamar, Lynher, Fowey, Avon, and Severn, and on the Cumbrian Coast) in 2001 by compensating netsmen not to fish for some, or all, of the season, or to release alive any salmon caught.
- The total number of salmon netting licences issued fell to 388 in 2001, representing a 57% reduction over the past 15 years. Angling effort also continued to decline.
- Although still legally required to release salmon caught before 16 June, anglers have been voluntarily releasing an increasing proportion of their catch after this date. Overall, 43% of all rod-caught salmon were released in 2001.
- The Environment Agency introduced a second reminder system to improve the reporting rate for salmon and migratory trout rod catches. Together with improvements in the national rod licence database, this helped to increase the proportion of anglers (annual licences) making catch returns from 71% in 2000 to 86% in 2001.

UK (Northern Ireland)

- New bye-laws - the Fisheries (Amendment) Bye-Laws (Northern Ireland) 2002 - came into operation in the Fisheries Conservancy Board (FCB) area on 1 March 2002. These restrict angling for salmon to "catch and release" from the start of the angling season to 31 May and introduce a two-fish bag limit from 1 June for the rest of the season. These bye-laws give legal status to the voluntary arrangement which was introduced in the 2001 fishing season. (We did not have the necessary statutory powers to introduce a ban on the sale of rod-caught salmon).
- A voluntary scheme to buy out the commercial nets in the FCB area was announced in April 2001, with funding of £1.5m from the Northern Ireland Executive and £0.5m to be contributed by the North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF). To date 16 out of a total of 34 salmon businesses have signed up formal agreements to cease fishing. In effect

this has removed nine fixed draft nets, four fixed bag nets, five drift nets, four tidal draft nets and four salmon boxes from commercial salmon fishing.

- The FCB has agreed proposals for further controls on commercial exploitation of wild salmon to ensure that the potential effectiveness of the voluntary buyout scheme is not compromised. This will reduce the number of commercial fishing licences available in line with the number of licences compensated under the voluntary scheme. These bye-laws will also introduce further restrictions on the fishing season for drift nets in the sea and tidal waters in the FCB area – the fishing season will be restricted from 1 June to 31 July in any year. It is proposed that these bye-laws will come into operation on 1 August 2002.
- Salmon tagging regulations were introduced during 2001 (on 14 May 2001 for the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission area and 3 September 2001 for the FCB area). These require a tag to be fixed to all salmon and sea trout over 50 cm which are caught and retained and catch statistics are required to be recorded in log-books. These regulations will provide much improved information on salmon catches (commercial and angling), reduce poaching and improve estimates of unreported catches.
- The Foyle area continues to operate a “real time” management of the salmon stock system which effectively means that the exploitation of the returning adult fish can be reduced if the numbers of fish reaching the spawning tributaries is insufficient.
- Work has continued on the implementation of the Salmon Management Plan in the FCB area, which is also a catchment-based approach to salmon management, involving the setting of spawning/conservation targets at catchment level consistent with the NASCO Precautionary Approach.
- A programme of in-river surveys of habitat status is currently ongoing in a number of the main catchments including the Foyle, the River Bush, River Blackwater, River Maine and Glendun River.
- In December 2001 an EU-funded Water-Based Tourism programme was launched which will, make funding available to angling clubs for, *inter alia*, fisheries habitat improvement works.

UK (Scotland)

- The Salmon Conservation (Scotland) Act 2001 came into force in April 2001. This makes provision for the Scottish Ministers to make regulations for the conservation and management of salmon and sea trout in Scotland. Regulations may be made upon application to Ministers by fishery managers, or by the Ministers themselves. In each case, full public consultation is required.
- The Western Isles Salmon Fishery District Designation Order 2001 created a new salmon fishery district covering all of the Outer Hebrides, and abolishing the old salmon fishery districts that it replaced. A new Western Isles District Salmon Fishery Board has been established as the local management body, and to enforce salmon fishery legislation in this new district.
- Work continues to maintain and update the list of owners and operators of salmon fisheries from whom catch returns are required by law. Catch statistics are published annually. 95% of the forms issued are returned.
- The voluntary practice of catch and release in the Scottish angling fishery for salmon has continued to increase, rising from 32% in 2000 to 39% in 2001.

- In 2001, Scottish salmon netmen deferred the start of their fishing season by 6 weeks again.
- Work has continued by Fishery Trusts and District Salmon Fishery Boards throughout Scotland on habitat restoration and enhancement of streams. In the Tweed catchment, for example, the area accessible to spawning salmon has been increased by some 40% over the last decade as a result of removal of barriers to migration and habitat improvement.
- The establishment of Fishery Trusts continues, with recent bodies being set up in the Clyde and Ayrshire rivers areas. Scientists employed by Fishery Trusts and District Salmon Fishery Boards now provide advice to managers throughout most of mainland Scotland and the Western Isles.
- A series of Area Management Agreements has been established in the west and north-west of Scotland under the auspices of the Tripartite Working Group. This Group comprises representatives of the wild salmon interests, the salmon farming industry and the Scottish Executive. These Agreements have led to closer cooperation between wild salmon and salmon farming interests on issues of mutual concern.
- A Scottish Statutory Instrument has been issued requiring notification of escapes from fish farms. A Code of Practice on containment, based largely on that developed by NASCO, has been adopted throughout the Scottish salmon farming industry. Contingency plans for the recapture of escaped fish are being developed on a site-specific basis.
- The Scottish Fisheries Coordination Centre (SFCC) has continued to develop its proposals for collecting and collating data in a standard format. SFCC is a partnership including representatives of District Salmon Fishery Boards, Fishery Trusts, Fisheries Research Services Freshwater Laboratory, and the Scottish Executive. Valuable input is provided by other organisations such as Scottish and Southern Energy (the principal hydro-electricity generator in Scotland), and the University of Durham Geography Department.
- A Green Paper, Scotland's Freshwater Fish and Fisheries: Securing their Future, was issued for consultation in August 2001. An analysis of the results of the consultation has been submitted to the Scottish Ministers. The Green Paper was debated in the Scottish Parliament in April 2002.