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16 August 2021

Dear Sirs

I refer to the proposed By Law: Designated Salmonid Waters Bye-Law No XXX, 2021.

I first fished Lough Mask more than 40 years ago. Then, it was a superb wild Brown Trout Lough. I returned annually until finally retiring to Castletown, Ballinrobe in 2018. Any angler who has fished for trout over the years will be saddened by the ever decreasing quality of the trout angling on Lough Mask and others of these great waters. There are now only sparse day-time hatches of fly life, including mayflies and sedges. Eutrophication is self evident, due to the increasing use of fertilizers, slurry applications and greater nutrient inputs from the local population. Parts of the lake are further contaminated by "rock snot" (*Didymosphenia geminata*). The lack of surface fly life has contributed to the declining trout catches. The Lough is now also holding a huge population of roach, bream and hybrids, which are putting further pressure on the ecosystem.

The Irish Loughs are some of the few in Europe which can provide high quality trout angling. More effort should be put into restoring them to their former status. I am well aware of the efforts of the local Fisheries Officers in trying to control predators and coarse fish populations. Despite their limited resources some progress is clearly being made.

I therefore strongly object to the proposed By-Law which would state that "The designated waters shall be managed primarily for the benefit of wild salmonid species". This implies that populations of coarse fish should also be managed. These are alien species and have no place in salmonid fisheries. They were introduced by the irresponsible, and illegal, actions of the tiny number of pike anglers who fish these loughs. It is vital that steps are taken to eliminate these alien species, as far as is possible. The proposed By-Law also sends the wrong message concerning efforts to improve water quality, which is essential if we are to halt, and improve, these lakes and restore them to their original quality. I would therefore request that the wording of this by-law is revised to remove "primarily". These waters should be managed solely as salmonid waters. They are a unique national and international resource and should be treated accordingly.

Yours faithfully

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