

## Bill Goggins

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**From:** Slaney River Trust SRT <slaneyrivertrust@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Saturday 20 November 2021 16:13  
**To:** IFD Public Consultations  
**Cc:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Re: Slaney 2022

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Below please see submission in relation to the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme Regulations 2021, to provide for the management of the wild salmon and sea trout fishery by Inland Fisheries Ireland from 1st January 2022.

This submission relates to THE RIVER SLANEY and in particular to the opening date for salmon anglers. In the absence of a date published within the draft we have been left with no choice but to make the assumption that opening and closing dates will be in line with 2021.

On Wed, Oct 27, 2021 at 1:00 PM [REDACTED] wrote:  
Dear Minister Ryan,

I am a keen angler, a conservationist and a Slaney River Trust Director.

I have worked for 15 years as a volunteer to enhance the River Slaney by engaging with the public, state bodies and fisheries to create better habitat and improve free passage of fish. It was a love of angling that got me hooked of course and this has led to an overwhelming desire to help protect these amazing creatures and I believe this is the case for many of the Slaney's advocates.

I would like the opening date of March 1st to be restored as I feel the benefits far outweigh any potential negative impacts. I understand that the idea of a later opening time is to protect the precious multi sea winter salmon and the classification of the Slaney being a predominantly Multi sea winter salmon river has resulted in this later opening time.

I strongly believe that this policy is actually having the opposite effect to the one desired, for a number of reasons, I will outline them below.

- Poaching has become a huge problem on the Slaney. Lack of legitimate anglers on the banks, largely due to policy decisions and which has been exacerbated during covid restrictions has led to a new wave of poachers who have unintentionally been given the opportunity to educate themselves on where and how to poach successfully. There is no doubt that the level of poaching and numbers of poachers has increased in recent years, we need to understand that the above issues are the key reasons for the uptrend.
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- Inland Fisheries staff do a great job and the local lads in particular work tirelessly during the year to protect stocks but they are unquestionably under-resourced. It's not a hard task, it's an impossible task for them to be expected to cover the entire river 24/7. The fines that are handed out in the event that a poacher is caught are not fitting and certainly not a deterrent. The department has a free poaching preventive at their disposal in the angling community, if utilised correctly they should be a huge asset to IFI in protecting salmon.
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- Ghillies and fishery managers who would have once looked after the fisheries are a thing of the past, due to recent policies, the income is simply not there to provide these jobs. These jobs are a huge loss to salmon protection and the local economies along the river.

- We (the genuine angling community) do not want to kill salmon, we practice catch and release and have no desire for tags, now or in the future.
- Cold water in March provides the perfect conditions to release a salmon with near perfect survival rates.
- IFI study proves survival of a fly caught salmon in spring is greater than 98%, Ref Paddy Gargan IFI report 2014.
- Closing policies continue to push people that care away from the river, we need to be doing the opposite, we need to be drawing people that care and have a desire to protect the salmon back to the river.
- Local clubs and associations are dying off because of lack of income and lack of interest brought on by restrictive policies.
- "The Spring fish" are what anglers crave, it's what draws people thousands of miles across countries and continents. The global recreational angling industry is massive and growing every year. The community generates a vast amount of money which is spread out across the various economies while being extremely catch and release focused. The more income we generate the more we can put back into conservation. On a good day the Slaney would put it up to any of these desirable and expensive international destinations like Iceland, Norway and Russia in particular.

We are pushing people away from our rivers instead of inviting them in where they can contribute to the local economies and play a huge part in the survival of our salmon. It's time we move away from the old structure which is built around the ability to tag and kill fish and move to a more positive view of our rivers where we promote angling, encourage the sport and the catch and release mentality which is now engraved in the modern angling community. We need to welcome new people to the sport both young and old, we need to build and encourage that interest in our rivers.

Please do not underestimate the negative impact of these recent policies which are suffocating this community and inadvertently impacting the survival of the salmon we are all trying to protect. Promotion, initiatives, funding, support and raising awareness would be far better actions for your department and IFI to take.

March 1st opening negatives are negligible, the positives are endless.

Thank you for listening,

[Redacted signature]

