

**From:** fissta2017@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Friday 9 December 2022 16:38  
**To:** IFD Public Consultations  
**Subject:** FW: FISSTA SUBMISSION TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE WILD SALMON AND SEA TROUT TAGGING SCHEME REGULATIONS 2022 FOR 2023 SEASON  
**Attachments:** Federation of Irish Salmon and Seatrout Anglers submission 9.12.22.pdf

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**Subject:** FISSTA SUBMISSION TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE WILD SALMON AND SEA TROUT TAGGING SCHEME REGULATIONS 2022 FOR 2023 SEASON



*Federation of Irish Salmon  
& Sea Trout Anglers*

Conaidhm na Slat Iascairí Bradáin agus Breac Geal  
*F.I.S.S.T.A.*

**Email:** [fissta2017@gmail.com](mailto:fissta2017@gmail.com)

**FISSTA SUBMISSION TO THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON THE WILD SALMON AND SEA TROUT TAGGING SCHEME REGULATIONS 2022, TO PROVIDE FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF THE WILD SALMON AND SEA TROUT FISHERY BY INLAND FISHERIES IRELAND FROM JAN 1<sup>ST</sup> 2023**

Submitted from the FISSTA Secretariat in Donegal 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022  
to: [IFDPublicConsultations@decc.gov.ie](mailto:IFDPublicConsultations@decc.gov.ie) or:

**TO: Minister Eamonn Ryan TD, FAO Inland Fisheries Division Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications Elm House Earlsvale Road Cavan Town H12 A8H7**

Dear Minister,

On Friday last the 2<sup>nd</sup> of December, the Inland Fisheries Ireland online shop commenced selling 2023 rod licenses without our terms and conditions applying to that license for the coming season being published. This was not possible as we were halfway from the 15<sup>th</sup>

November 2022 going through the public consultation process which will end on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 2022. After this time, we are to assume, that all the submissions and proposals under this process will be read, considered and acted upon accordingly before Minister Ryan signs off on them before the opening of the salmon season on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2023. This process as managed by Inland Fisheries Division in your Department is proof positive of how we anglers are treated in the general scheme of management at your offices. Never has there been a submission to the annual public consultation been considered and the Draft Regulations changed as a result which confirms the farce in which your department treats the process and the submission writers. This must change and FISSTA refuse to accept such treatment and seek your intervention and response in this matter immediately.

We raise once again, the annual and the ongoing problem of allowing a commercial netting fishery in Cork Harbour, which we claim is unacceptable based on the scientific facts. Therefore, we seek an immediate end to draft netting in Cork Harbour as long as the Owenacurra / Middleton River is closed as it was in 2022 or as Catch and Release status projected in 2023, as these fish must be protected from netting exploitation. How can this be allowed to continue? Stocks on this fishery are so seriously depleted, that your department and IFI lack of protection was highlighted in Edinburgh at NASCO last June 2022. We should not have to highlight this error which has been allowed to continue for far too long with the ridiculous allocation as objected to at the Fishery District Committee of 75% to the Commercial Nets and a measly 25% to the rods. .

We have heard and read that these screening AA reports were used as your defence for these management decisions. We know the consultancy company called Invas Biosecurity that produced the screening reports of 2021 and 2022 is led by a former IFI employee who we know very well, and is one of the top names in the country regarding non-native aquatic invasives and whose work we acknowledge and commend for this body of work. However, commercial salmon netting is an entirely different matter and many dispute their interpretation of the data to give the green light to the commercial netters to exploit what should be a protected fishery. We take issue with their findings and rationale especially, the 2021 and 2022 which I enclose below.

[INVAS AA 2022.pdf](#)

We highlight an Appropriate Assessment (AA) Stage 1 Screening for Conservation of Salmon and Sea Trout (Draft Nets and Snap Nets) Bye-law, 2021 and Appropriate Assessment Stage 1 Screening for Conservation of Salmon and Sea Trout (Draft Nets and Snap Nets) Bye-law, 2022.

which is available on line:

<https://assets.gov.ie/129075/2650f54b-2932-4484-8b88-a9c3bf0e29ee.pdf>  
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This relates to Salmon and Sea Trout (Draft Nets and Snap Nets) Bye-law, 2021, and 2022 which approves for salmon to be netted around the coasts of our country despite ever increasing evidence of the demise of stocks.

We take issue with this assessment as inadequate as it does not thoroughly assess other plans and projects, a requirement of AA following guidance:

[https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NPWS\\_2009\\_AA\\_Guidance.pdf](https://www.npws.ie/sites/default/files/publications/pdf/NPWS_2009_AA_Guidance.pdf)

It is stated that the proposed Conservation of Salmon and Sea Trout (Draft Nets and Snap Nets) Bye-law for 2021 and 2022 has taken into account the most up to date scientific evidence and advice providing predicted abundances of Atlantic Salmon stocks in Irish rivers. However, the growing agri sector and related worsening water quality of natal streams has not been considered. This is surely an important issue regarding reproduction and survival of young fish. There needs to be a full examination of all impacts on salmon in the rivers assessed in the report.

It is stated that “The timing of the open dates primarily from mid-May (12th) to the end of July (31st) will allow Springers the opportunity to pass upstream into freshwater spawning grounds without the pressures of commercial fishing practices”. This will allow Atlantic Salmon with the highest reproductive capabilities the opportunity to spawn without being impacted by commercial fishing activity’. What about climate change and the lack of floods during the spring time? Take this year or last year for example and the lack of floods, limiting migration windows for ascending salmon. See the graph for flow in the Blackwater (Cork / Waterford) at Killavullen this spring. Surely this makes spring salmon vulnerable to netting and overfishing.

In section 2021 / 4.3. ‘In-Combination Effects’ it is stated that ‘No significant in-combination effects are envisaged that are likely to have a significant effect on a Natura 2000 site’. One would have to dispute the thoroughness of the report in this regard without even consulting a reputable consultant for their professional opinion. It is stated that the use of a logging and tagging system, as well as surveillance by IFI protects Atlantic salmon populations against illegal operations such as poaching “Fisheries Officers regularly patrol rivers to enforce the Regulations and byelaws to ensure Salmon stocks are protected”. IFI are deemed understaffed when it comes to poaching and there is no way that fishermen with nets are being monitored adequately, despite the more recent improvements. When it comes to the conservation of a species in decline, regularly isn’t enough. Look at all the nets seized in on-line reports e.g.

<https://fishinginireland.info/2020/fishing-updates/inland-fisheries-ireland-seize-illegal-nets-and-fish-caught-at-sea/>

It is stated that “Any White clawed crayfish, Lamprey or Twait Shad hauled in on the nets would be unwanted bycatch and must be returned to the watercourse immediately”. Who will enforce this and what guarantee is there?

What about by catch and impacts on Special Protection Areas during this net fishing? We assume the 2023 report will cite similar once again, so it needs to be revised and the conclusions critically examined. It is clearly pointed out in NPWS guidance for AA that where doubt exists about the risk of a significant effect, an AA must be carried out.

Here is an extract from the ICES Advice on fishing opportunities, catch, and effort Northeast Atlantic ecoregions for 2021 "No fishery for salmon has been prosecuted at the Faroes since 2000. The reported (i.e nominal) catch in the NEAC area in 2020 is 778 t. Estimates of unreported catches in the NEAC area were 238 t in total (<https://www.ices.dk/sites/pub/Publication%20Reports/Advice/2021/2021/sal.neac.all.pdf>).

This also casts doubt on the exploitation at sea, with probably much more salmon being taken, so further invalidates the report. The failure of the state to address the impact of salmon farming, genetic dilution, pollution and sea lice amongst others, which were not, or not adequately assessed, in the report, has left us with no option but to defend the Wild Atlantic salmon habitat by applying for a judicial review of an DAFM license awarded in 2016 and upheld by ALAB last August 2021 for MOWI at Shot Head in Bantry Bay. We acknowledge and thank you Minister for hearing our pleas on this issue and for your support to IFI for the legal action now underway in this matter. We also appreciate your expression of our long held sentiments on salmon farming which you communicated to DAFM at the beginning of this year which was refuted by your cabinet colleague Charlie Mac Conalogue, which will become a matter for regret in the future which he will eventually have to withdraw. No doubt he will state that he was only following departmental advice. Not scientific, but departmental advice, which so many ministers have come to regret in the past.

We appeal to you Minister Ryan as a strong conservationist of the wild Atlantic salmon to continue to take the necessary steps immediately, so that the 2023 season will properly protect our migrating smolts and returning salmon to these shores.

Kind regards, Yours sincerely

Issued on Tue, 15/11/2022

Mr. Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, gives statutory notice of his intention to make the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme (Amendment) Regulations 2022, to provide for the management of the wild salmon and sea trout fishery by Inland Fisheries Ireland from 1st January 2023.

A copy of the draft regulations is open for public inspection at the offices of the Department in Cavan.


It is also available to download from the Department's website

[www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie) - [Public consultation on the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme \(Amendment\) Regulations 2022 and Conservation Measures for the 2023 season \(www.gov.ie\)](http://www.gov.ie)

Anyone wishing to submit observations on, or objections to, the draft regulations can do so by email to [IFDPublicConsultations@decc.gov.ie](mailto:IFDPublicConsultations@decc.gov.ie) or post to:

*Inland Fisheries Division Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications Elm House Earlsvale Road Cavan Town H12 A8H7*

**The closing date for submissions to the Department is 5.30pm on 9th December 2022**

 Federation of Irish Salmon and Seatrout Anglers Teelin Rd Carrick Co Donegal Ireland. Email: [fissta2017@gmail.com](mailto:fissta2017@gmail.com)  
Tel: \_\_\_\_\_  
Text: \_\_\_\_\_



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Conaidhm na Slat Iascairi Bradáin agus Breac Geal

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