

Slawoimr Preis

From:
Sent: 01 December 2016 16:46
To: POLICYREVIEW
Subject: Pike Management in Brown Trout Fisheries

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Please consider my views regarding so called "pike management" in designated brown trout fisheries.

I

have been fishing on Western Loughs since 2005 and in 2008 I set up my guiding business here. On average I'm on the water about 200 times per year and I'm witnessing some huge changes on both Corrib and Mask, due to "pike management".

General factors:

At

the moment "pike management policy" is just fueling conflict between pike and trout anglers. IFI is carrying out pike removal operations which are not exactly followed by the IFI's own guidelines and regulations. Fish are slaughtered in most barbaric way- gill nets, which are a death traps not only for pike! All other fish species and water birds are dying in them! I have witnessed nets with trout, pike, salmon and coarse fish trapped and decomposing in them, not only pike! IFI is greatly understaffed organization and pike removal/ killing operations are done under great costs. This money would be better used for more patrols on the water, pollution control and weed growth problem.

Current bylaws

are outdated and should be changed to protect fish stocks. Currently it is allowed to remove 4 brown and 1 ferox trout from the lakes by one angler in any day within the season! Also killing more than 1 pike is prohibited, while IFI still trying to eradicate pike from those waters. This is nonsense. Majority of trout competitions from small local Club events, up to International competitions are run on killed fish!

Is there any other country in Europe running competitions with trout as main catch on killed fish?

Biological factors:

Pike

is proved to be "native species" in Ireland. For thousands of years, all species thrived on Western Loughs without any problems- including Trout, Salmon, Pike, Perch, Bream.... there was

no problem with
"too high" pike numbers or "too low" trout numbers. Waters had their healthy, balanced ecosystems
and no human interference was needed. There also wasn't pollution/ weed growth issue...
In only 10
years I'm witnessing huge changes on mentioned Loughs. 10 years ago, pike fishing was much better,
but also trout fishing was better! Higher numbers of pike didn't reduced number of trout catches.
Moreover average size of trout was better! Now discussion is on trout- pike interactions, but this can't
be discussed if other, bigger issues are not taken into consideration! 25 years ago there was not a single
roach on Corrib. They were introduced into Moycullen lakes, and not long after they found their way to
Corrib.

In just few years, roach population exploded and now roach and roach/ bream hybrids are the biggest
part of entire fish bio mass on Corrib, which was proved by latest Stock Assessment carried out on
Corrib by IFI. This is the biggest problem for trout stocks as those fish are competing with trout on the
same food sources! This has much stronger biological impact, then predatory interactions! in these few
years roach almost destroyed bream stocks on Corrib. This was done not only as a result of food
competition, but also inbreeding. With every year bream genes are being "wiped out" and eventually
bream will extinct. With removing of the main predatory fish from the lake- pike, IFI is actually helping
Roach in their crusade in taking over the lake! not long, trout will struggle in finding food sources, and
their numbers will start to decline dramatically. Then off course pike will be blamed again.
Lough

Mask is excellent example of this interactions. Pike removal operations in the past nearly destroyed
their stocks in mentioned Lough. What we are witnessing now is that trout stocks are getting much
smaller then before! average sizes of the trout caught throughout the year is much smaller then in
previous years. World Cup is just one prove of that.
With very little pike left another bigger problem is just at the door- Roach get it's way to mask a well.
Since few years their numbers are growing rapidly. How many tonnes of food will they remove from
Mask, before trout??? Carra, Conn, Cullin are in the same situation! The only way to prevent this is to let
ecosystem sort it out by healthy natural interactions between native species of fish which managed to
survive over thousands of years.

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Of course Western Loughs are in need of help. This is due to human impact made in them in the past in today. Water pollution, weed growth and over fishing are the problems which should be addressed and resolved immediately.

Economical factors:

Pike

control operations are no.1 reason, why we are losing huge part of the tourist market. As previous IFI research shown, pike and coarse fishing sector is generating more income in the "angling Tourism area" than game or sea fishing. Can state really afford to lose this income? At the moment anglers from UK, are avoiding Ireland as tourist destination, for the simple reason of showing disagreement to the pike management policies! There have been huge campaign taking place and run by Pike Clubs of Great Britain, and supported by famous anglers. At the moment boycotting West of Ireland is in full swing and we are hugely affected by this situation. Good Pike fishing can extend business for all local business, for the hardest time in the year- outside of the trout season. Most of B&B's and small family run hotels, are shut for the winter, when with the promotion of pike angling, they could be open all year round supporting much needed income for local community! this is not only accommodation sector which is affected- pubs, shops, petrol stations, etc, would appreciate more tourist traffic in winter!

Summary:

Pike as native species should be given their rightful status and protection.

Inland

Fisheries Ireland must stop pike removal operations from wild brown trout fisheries, as pike by any means is the reason of declining trout stocks.

Inland Fisheries Ireland must stop using "section 59" exemption which is allowing greater number of

pike to be killed during competitions.

Picture of the pike as negative ecological element in managed brown trout fisheries, must be reviewed,

and pike recognized as important part of healthy, stable ecosystem.

Funding

currently used for pike removal operations should be used to improve ecological habitat, spawning

streams and condition of the fishery as whole.

Pike fishing should be kept and promoted as year round activity, to promote tourism and in

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benefit of

local business.

Pike by laws and regulations should in place to protect them.

Trout bag limits should be decreased to 1 maximum 2 fish per day.

All competitions should be run on strictly catch and release basis.

Regards'

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