

George Barron

Inland Fisheries Ireland - Pike and Trout policy review. 28th. November 2016

Dear Sirs

I am a regular visiting angler who has been fortunate enough to have enjoyed fishing for wild brown trout on all the Great Western Loughs of Ireland during the last thirty odd years, both competitively but mostly for pleasure. The attraction for me has always been, and hopefully always will be, attempting to catch the great trout of incredible quality that inhabit Lough Corrib, unquestionably the finest wild brown trout fishing venue in Europe.

Therefore, it is with great sadness and somewhat unbelievable, that I should even find it necessary to contemplate writing this letter in support of a submission document being prepared by the Oughterard Anglers and Boatmen Association expressing their very genuine concerns regarding cessation of pike culling on Lough Corrib.

As a species, pike must surely inhabit almost every river and lough and open drain in Ireland and they are not, and likely never will be a species under threat. Pike can, and do, live and survive in the muckiest and unhealthiest of water environment - something wild brown trout can't do - and in many instances they have been criminally introduced by 'others' to the detriment of the indigenous brown trout and other migratory fish. Something perhaps, and much to their embarrassment, Inland Fisheries Ireland should have devoted extra resource to prevent and remedy, rather than pander to lobbying by a Body who have the opportunity to practice their sport on waters far more numerous than the few, but very fertile limestone waters in the country, such as Lough Corrib. Inland Fisheries Ireland have also been given a remit within which they have been trusted to look after and manage Lough Corrib and its incredible ecology, not just for the benefit of a few but for the benefit of the majority and the country. Corrib is one of Ireland's crown jewels and unreservedly, it must be the IFI's duty to preserve and look after this special place for future generations to enjoy and fish and to ensure that 'common sense' regulation overrides budget and manpower constraints as would appear to be the issue at present. Currently in the UK, certainly in Wales, the Bodies overseeing fishing interests are also trying to juggle priorities against falling Government revenues and are failing badly. We have now reached a point where the angling clubs are beginning to work hand-in-hand with those in control, definitely in situations where local issues can be resolved by voluntary labour supplied by local clubs. I can envisage a similar working partnership in and around Lough Corrib to benefit both the IFI and the clubs, and more importantly, to benefit the Lough and its major resource, the wild brown trout. It's not rocket science to realise that if the culling of pike on the lough is stopped, the new, greater head-count of pike will ultimately thrive and increase, creating intense pressure on wild

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trout stocks

and producing an unsustainable balance in the future. A point has recently been highlighted and well documented in an excellent article in a local newspaper by Danny Goldrick. Once a trout fishery slides into decline it will never recover. As a nation, Scotland should hang its head in shame at the demise of Loch Leven, a natural fishery that once provided eyed-ova to the rest of the world to enhance and improve stocks. Today, in a relatively short period, in one generation in fact, it has become a mere shadow of what was once the greatest wild trout venue in the world.

My worry is, that if the policy for cessation of pike culling on Lough Corrib goes ahead, I will be witnessing the beginning of the end for the place I lovingly refer to as Mecca. The IFI and the Irish

Government must remember and be aware of the outcome from a lobby by game anglers in the late 1980s and the resulting consequences, and think long and hard on this issue. I, and many

like me will watch with great interest as to how this issue is resolved, and hopefully still be able to consider whether Lough Corrib remains a worthy place to visit and fish once or twice a season.

Yours sincerely

George Barron

Wales.