

# Management of Pike in Designated Brown Trout Fisheries Review Group

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08 May 2017, Citywest

**Attending:** Sean Long, Myles Kelly, Josie Mahon, Declan Cooke, Colm Fitzgerald, Paul O'Reilly, Catherine Kerins, Sam Sheppard, Joe Keena, John Connolly, David Hamill, Paul Byrne

## Presentations

- Dr. Robert Rosell & Dr. Dennis Ensing (AFBI NI)
- Dr. Debbi Pedreschi (IMI)
- Mr. John Curtis (ESRI)
- Dr. Martin O'Grady

The format for the meetings with the invited experts was not set.

While each expert has their own specialist area, they were circulated the following key questions:

1. The benefit of pike management?
2. Do wild brown trout populations increase or decrease in designated wild brown trout fisheries where pike management is carried out?
3. What is international 'best practice' in the management of both spp.?
4. Is pike a native sp.?
5. Is the theory that pike prefer to prey upon brown trout rather than other spp. valid?
6. What effect does pike predation have on other coarse fish spp. in the designated fisheries?
7. What impact do other spp. have on brown trout in the lakes?
8. What Irish river systems and lakes now contain pike but did not contain pike when record keeping began?
9. Can pike be effectively removed from systems into which they have been introduced?
10. Which Irish waters (if any) are more suited to pike than brown trout now- and why?
11. What scientific evidence is available to demonstrate what would happen to other spp. populations if IFI stopped managing pike in the designated waters?
12. Which waters, if any, should be considered as unique 'brown trout fisheries', and why?
13. What, if any, is the optimum level of natural predation to sustain healthy species populations?

## Dr Robert Rosell

### Q & A

1. JK – is removal of pike necessary to maintain trout populations? (O'Grady 1995)  
RR -O'Grady '95 pre zebra mussel; need to maintain some cropping to maintain fishery

2. JK- O'Grady / Delanty 2008- some of which is post ZM?

RR- Pike sampled are larger i.e. gone piscivorous; defer to those who have studied specific lakes i.e. IFI in Southern Ireland.

3. DH- have you confidence in available data?

PB- Data that pike prefer trout –

RR- Trout in L. Erne – 2% biomass, far more in SCA than should be

4. SS- I believe seasonality is a factor

RR- More data available in 2018 – acoustic soundings

5. DH- Any SIA carried out?

RR- No. It will tell you trophic level, 6 months limit on use of data; 1999 -2000 Erne study – 63% trout/salmon/smolt

6. JK – time of year an impact?

RR – this is what we have as data.

7. JK – Seasonal closing of areas to protect spawning areas – only gill nets prohibited?

RR – fishery is open all year

8. DH- Netting surveys – change in water clarity may be moving sp. away from the margins?

RR- Cannot compare Corrib with Erne, though Erne in current state is much more like Corrib; Corrib very clear so ZM didn't have as much impact. Kathleen Maguire has completed zooplankton crop PhD.

## Dr Denis Ensing

### Q & A

1. JK – regarding pike status as a native sp.?

DE –Post-glacial dispersal is his area of interest; Pedreschi's theory 'not possible'; both views are hypotheses only – needs more sampling, size too small;

Henry Newland - mention of pike in Erne in 1851 before Shannon- Erne canal;

Most recent date is from early Iron Age;

2. DH- Irish Naturalist Journal – Declan Quigley – re 7,500 years ago;

RR- East coast – Normans c. 1000 years ago, moving from east coast

DE- Funding available for more extensive survey pan UK/Europe

RR- Native cut off point – FIL2 dropped the question early on as to whether native / non-native applied based on the sp present; FIL 2 assigns the sp. under influence to ecology

3. DH – have to manage with what you've got?

RR- Would recommend extermination of pike if they got into the Melvin system.

4. DC- Introduction of pike in last 30 years – IFI data of seine nets – Peter O'Reilly – data in our archives

Dr. John Casselman - Bibliography of Pike – no pike before 1600s...?

RR - Is it possible that pike weren't discovered earlier e.g. pollen?

## Dr. Debbi Pedreschi

1. Re: naturalised or native?  
Population structure similar to Britain  
Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence
2. Can we tell if pike prefer trout?  
Not what Pedreschi tested but would be surprised if they did.
3. Are pike a threat?  
Probably, but not in isolation [i.e. environmental impacts on habitat, invasives etc.]
4. Pedreschi not biased, advocates precautionary approach
5. Current question a political question – not biological – angling, not species driven – [this is] a review of ‘fisheries’
6. Did not say they are native – pike as likely / more likely to be native per available data
7. Study not intended to study whether pike preferred trout
8. Pike should be viewed as naturalised, question of status shouldn’t be considered
9. Lake designation is based on angling, not biology
10. In her experience, brown trout are not the main prey of pike
11. [pike] can have an impact on trout, but not in isolation
12. PB- Erne study – short period of time – vast majority of samples came from a period when trout/pike overlap – age is key – first 5 years pike don’t eat trout
13. DH- native v non-native – need more evidence but it’s not forthcoming/available

## Mr John Curtis

1. JK – The questions were unfair. Impossible to make choices. Respondents needed to know about Lagarosiphon  
JC – 82% response rate. A photo of Lagarosiphon was included

There followed a discussion on the types of questions in the choice experiment. The design of the survey, consultation with stakeholders and the objectives of the work.

## Dr Martin O’Grady

1. JK- Pedreschi sample size was small – not her fault – request Chairman to consider inviting genetic specialists mentioned by Dr. O’Grady (Dr. Paolo Prodall QU and Dr. Philip McGinnity UCC)
2. DH- Is there a ‘fear’ that pike might be considered a native species?  
MOG-scientific data and accessibility is getting cheaper and better, so science will improve; personal view is that policy shouldn’t change until native status is confirmed or otherwise;
3. DH- L. Sheelin is not an example of how a fishery should be managed; roach living pelagically
4. DH- query re zooplankton sediment core sampling L. Sheelin post 2000 as proposed by R&D

## Actions

The following actions were assigned:

- MK to upload presentations to web on receipt