



Iascach Intíre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland

SPOTLIGHT
series

Promoting sustainable angling



More anglers than golfers in Ireland

"There's a real energy in the place when an angling group is staying," says Dominic Ó Moráin, (pictured above). "The whole community buzzes off their passion." Dominic is Chair of the **Great Fishing Houses of Ireland**, a group of some of the finest establishments in Ireland, ranging from homely guesthouses to mansions. They cater in particular for anglers, who can be defined as those who catch fish as a sport or as a hobby. It might surprise you to learn there are more anglers in Ireland than golfers.

Anglers are the eyes and ears on fish and habitats. They are stewards of this important resource, protecting and advocating for Ireland's natural environment.



Why is Ireland a great place for angling?

Anglers come for our wonderful fish and scenery, of course, and to visit our renowned fisheries. They come to be taught by our 'ghillies' or guides and to soak up the knowledge of the local anglers. "Often in other countries the fish are stocked, so for many of our international visitors this is their first time catching wild fish in wild places," says Markus Müller, Angling Advisor at Inland Fisheries Ireland, (pictured above).

That's not all they come for, however. "The thing visitors tell me over and over," continues Markus, "is that in Ireland they get the complete package. Yes, they have a great time on the water, but they also have wonderful places to stay, great food, great pubs, live music, and the craic. It's an experience that's unique to Ireland."



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In promoting angling, a multiplier effect boosts not only the angling industry, but our economy as a whole.



Lough Inagh Lodge
- member of Great Fishing Houses

Why is angling great for Ireland?

As well as anglers helping safeguard Ireland's fish and habitats, they also bring us clear socio-economic benefits.

The numbers say it all. Over 327,000 people aged 16+ living in Ireland like to go angling, spending €633m a year between 2018 and 2020, according to calculations by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI). Pre-pandemic figures for between 2014 and 2018 record 150,000 overseas anglers coming to Ireland annually, contributing over €200 million to the economy each year. Combined, domestic and overseas anglers amount to close to half a million people a year.

All in all, it is estimated that angling in Ireland supports 13,000 jobs and brings in close to €1 billion to the economy each year.

Through his years in specialist fishing hospitality, Dominic has noted that anglers differ from other visitors: "Anglers spend more than other visitors, stay for longer, and repeat visit far more often than the average tourist visiting Ireland."

There is a multiplier effect too. Not only does the hospitality sector get a boost, but this trickles down to the guides, ghillies and instructors, retailers of equipment and clothing, charter boats and hire cars, the purchase of licences, and to revenue for the local café and the local gift shop. The whole community benefits from the extra footfall and the significant purchasing power of the average angler.



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How can Ireland grow as a sustainable angling destination?

It is clear why one of Inland Fisheries Ireland's key roles – and one of their greatest privileges – is to promote sustainable angling to a domestic and international base. Ireland faces stiff competition from other destinations, and so considerable marketing effort is needed, promoting not just the seasoned locations, but also the lesser known.

Although the theme of environmental stewardship, including reminders about angling regulations, is common across all communications, the target audience for angling is extremely diverse, with a huge range of specialist areas of interest, across salmon, trout, pike, coarse and sea angling. Inland Fisheries Ireland's promotional activities are therefore varied and multi-channel:

- The **fishinginireland.info** website and Facebook pages are published in English, Dutch, French, German and Italian, all of which are updated at least weekly with fishing reports, blogs and more. They carry extensive information for different types of anglers, along with links to buy licences, practical advice and listings on hiring boats, guides and equipment.
- More than a dozen specialist angling guides have been produced recently (making a total of over 60 angling publications in total).
- Their weekly ezine boasts a circulation of 15,000, showcasing individual anglers along with other providers such as boat charters.
- Dedicated articles and advertorials are published in the angling press.
- Dedicated media visits and familiarisation trips are organised and hosted.
- A considerable library of high-quality images and video footage – including that taken by a newly purchased drone – is used in Inland Fisheries Ireland's materials, and at times by other organisations.
- Sponsorship of a range of activities takes place: from large-scale angling festivals to club coaching courses. These engage new and seasoned anglers from all walks of life, including women anglers, youth groups, Scouts, members of the Travelling community and the LGBTQ+ community.
- The **somethingfishy.ie** website is a great educational resource for children and teachers on water, the environment, fish and angling.
- Up-to-date angling regulations are communicated via Inland Fisheries Ireland's websites and Facebook pages, press releases, brochures and ezine, as well as through a dedicated publication about Irish angling regulations available online and in print.



Attracting international anglers to Ireland

Inland Fisheries Ireland has previously promoted angling by ‘flying the flag’ at international angling expos and trade shows. At these, not only did Angling Advisors sell Ireland to anglers face to face, but critically they also developed relationships with influencers and other media, who could amplify and endorse their message through their own channels.

The payback from connecting with influencers face to face at trade shows has been immense. Markus cites an example: “Through nurturing two key US influencers via attendance at angling expos and in other ways, and bringing them to Ireland on a week-long angling trip, they have now listed Ireland – with extensive details – on a hugely influential US flyfishing website among the crème de la crème of worldwide angling destinations. This is as well as being featured in an industry-leading US magazine.”

Inland Fisheries Ireland is currently not attending international angling expos or trade shows. Since COVID-19, its focus has turned to seeking innovative ways of connecting with international anglers and media online.

These activities happen alongside significant collaboration with the other players in the field, including organisations such as **Tourism Ireland** and **Fáilte Ireland**. They regularly work together to promote sustainable angling in Ireland, thus acting collectively as an interface to support smaller providers: accommodation providers, tackle shops, guides, ghillies and others.

Angling sustainably and sustainable tourism



Markus Müller, Angling Advisor with
Inland Fisheries Ireland

Inland Fisheries Ireland promotes sustainable angling at every opportunity. ‘Catch and release’ – whereby fish are caught then carefully released – is standard practice. Other aspects of angling, for example the type of tackle used, also place a sharp focus on protecting the fish and their habitats. Most anglers are proud to spend the day on the water and champion the “leave no trace” ethos.

The promotion of sustainable angling is guided by Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media’s *Actions to Promote Sustainable Tourism Practices*. This involves supporting economic growth in communities throughout the country, with a greater spread of demand across the year. It’s also about protecting our natural landscape and water bodies and our historic and cultural assets for the next generation.



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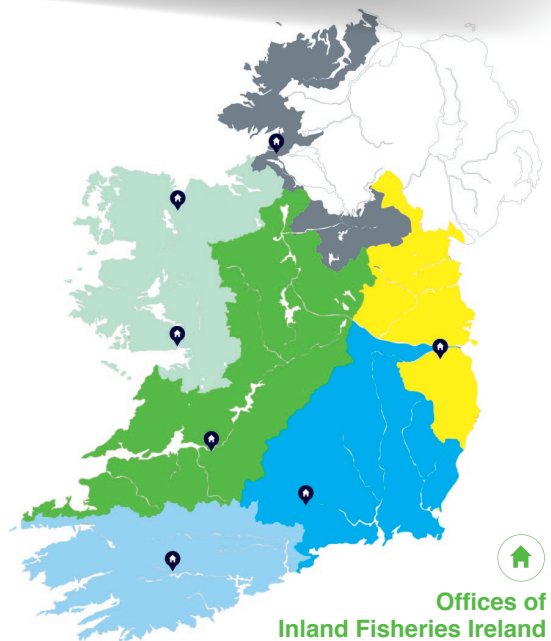
Anglers enjoying their time in Ireland

The future of angling in Ireland

Ireland is a bucket-list destination for many anglers. By promoting Ireland at home and overseas, Inland Fisheries Ireland is striving to encourage more anglers to convert their dream of visiting Ireland into reality.

With the right promotion, in collaboration with industry partners, the opportunities for our country are manifest: anglers can continue to be stewards of our fish and our habitats, while supporting and boosting not only the angling industry, but our communities and economy as a whole. Let's get more anglers out revelling in all that our waters have to offer.

To find out more about angling in Ireland, visit **www.FishingInIreland.info** or, for more about Inland Fisheries Ireland, visit **www.FisheriesIreland.ie**



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