



Central Fisheries Board

An Príomh-Bhord Iascaigh

**Report to the Minister for Communications,
Marine and Natural Resources**

from the

Central Fisheries Board

**on its activities during 2004 and those of each
Regional Board and Fisheries Cooperative
Society**



Fisheries Ireland
Our Natural Heritage

April 2005

Mission Statement

To ensure that the valuable natural resources of inland fisheries and sea angling are conserved, managed, developed and promoted in their own right and to support sustainable economic activity, recreational amenity and job creation.

The Fisheries Boards

The Fisheries Boards are the statutory agencies responsible for inland fisheries in Ireland and operate under the aegis of the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

The principal functions of the Central Fisheries Board are to:

- 1 advise the Minister for Communications, Marine & Natural Resources on policy relating to the conservation, protection, management, development and improvement of inland fisheries;
- 2 support, co-ordinate and provide specialist support services to the seven Regional Fisheries Boards; and
- 3 advise the Minister on the performance by Regional Fisheries Boards of their functions.

The seven Regional Fisheries Boards have responsibility for conservation, protection, development, management and promotion of inland fisheries in their regions. They have a duty to co-ordinate and co-operate in the delivery of a national fisheries service, observing principles of sustainability, biodiversity and the conservation of all species in inland water ecosystems.

Central Fisheries Board Members

- 1 Bill McLysaght (Chairperson)
- 2 Mr. Paddy Byrne
- 3 Ms. Paula Carroll
- 4 Dr. Alan Craig
- 5 Mr. Eamon Cusack
- 6 Mr. Lal Faherty
- 7 Dr. James J. King
- 8 Mr. Gerry Marry

Senior Management Team

John O' Connor	Chief Executive Officer
Nuala O'Byrne	Director of Finance
John McPhilips	Director of Human Resources
Brian Sheerin	Director of Protection and Conservation

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Chairperson's Report regarding the assessment of internal financial controls of the Central Fisheries Board as is required under paragraph 10.2 (iii) of the code of practice for the governance of state bodies

On behalf of the Central Fisheries Board, I hereby acknowledge that the Board is responsible for ensuring that an appropriate system of internal financial control is in operation within the Board.

I am satisfied that the systems which the Board has in place, are reasonable and appropriate for the Board's circumstances having regard to its size. However, the systems do not, and cannot, provide absolute assurance against material error.

The Board has adopted the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. All Regional Fisheries Boards have adopted the Code also.

The Board members are aware of and are fully compliant with the provisions of the Standards in Public Office Act 2001, and the Code of Business Conduct.

A comprehensive review of the Boards Human Resource Management policies is at an advanced stage. This review is being advanced on a partnership basis with the staff and unions.

The Board has an audit sub-committee whose duties include:

- a) review of annual financial statements before submission to the Board
- b) discussions as appropriate with the Comptroller and Auditor General's Office
- c) discussion of any problems and reservations arising from internal and external audit and any matters which auditors may wish to discuss with the committee (in the absence of management where necessary)
- d) to review the external auditor's management letter and management's response
- e) to review the Board's internal control systems with particular reference to EU funds
- f) to consider major findings of internal investigations and management's response
- g) to consider other relevant topics, as defined by the Board.

The chairperson of the audit sub-committee reports to the Board.

The Board takes the major strategic decisions and meets at regular intervals to monitor performance and plans. The executive management only act within the authority delegated to them by the Board to give effect to Board policy and decisions. The Board's professional advisors are available for consultation by the Board as required.

Legal matters were progressed having regard to professional advice procured by the Board.

A detailed procedures manual is in the course of preparation and management exercise close supervision over all significant transactions. Major sources of income are subjected to overall reconciliation and, where possible, staff duties are appropriately divided taking account of the risks involved and the limited number of staff. The following specific procedures are in place in order to provide effective financial control: -

- 1 Formal procedures are in place for the purchase of all goods and services, for approval of invoices in respect of goods and services and authorization of payment in respect of goods and services. Procedures in this regard have been strengthened from time to time and recommendations emerging from internal audits have been implemented.
- 2 Monthly accounts are presented to the Board. The Board operates a computerised accounting system, which is capable of providing a wide range of financial and accounting information.
- 3 Budgets are prepared in respect of each year and monthly statements of income and expenditure are produced to facilitate comparison with budgeted figures.
- 4 Together with the other Fisheries Boards, the Board has put in place a system of internal audit, which involves the audit of the Board's financial affairs by a firm of auditors. The Board's financial control procedures have been subject to 3 audit visits since 1999 in accordance with the cyclical arrangements for all Fisheries Boards. Reports have been provided, management has responded to these and action has been taken on recommendations as appropriate. Internal auditors have met with the audit sub committee.

With reference to section 10.2 of the Code, I wish to report the following position in relation to the Board.

- 5 There were no commercially significant developments affecting the Board during the year. The Board did not establish any subsidiaries, participate in joint ventures or acquire shares.
- 6 The Board has complied with all appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, procurement and disposal of assets and has complied with all relevant tax legislation.
- 7 Government policy on the pay of the Board's Chief Executive Officer and all employees is being complied with.
- 8 Government guidelines on payment of director's fees are being complied with; no fees are paid to ordinary members of the Board.

- 9 As of now, there have been no significant post balance sheet events. The Board's accounts for 2004 have yet to be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General and, therefore, the Board can only provide draft accounts at this time.
- 10 It is my understanding that the Guidelines for Appraisal and Management of Capital Expenditure Proposals are not relevant to the activities of the Board for the year 2004.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill McLysaght". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Bill McLysaght
Chairperson

Comment of the Chief Executive Officer

This report sets out what the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards and the Fisheries Cooperative Societies have been engaged in over the past year to advance the management of the inland fisheries and sea angling sectors in Ireland.

In 2004 the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards developed and agreed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. This SLA set out what service the Boards would provide to the Minister, the Inland Fisheries sector and to its own staff in 2004.

In the area of corporate governance the Boards have adopted the Government's Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and are proceeding with its implementation.

Under Sustaining Progress the Fisheries Boards have developed a comprehensive and challenging modernisation programme and are in the process of implementing this programme.

The Central Board secured new accommodation in Swords Business Campus during the year. Most staff are now located in these offices. Work is ongoing on the development of a new laboratory and the procurement of suitable warehousing. It is the aim of the Board to have secured high quality office, laboratory and warehousing accommodation in the Swords Campus at an early date. We wish to express our thanks to the Minister, his officials and OPW for their help in advancing this.

The Board continued in 2004 with its programme of policy development. Sectoral policies were advanced on brown trout and carp. A comprehensive review of the Boards' Human Resource Management policies is at an advanced stage. This review is being advanced on a partnership basis with the staff and unions.

The Boards continued, in 2004, to manage and implement the Minister's decisions on salmon management. While many stakeholders input into advising the Minister on his salmon management strategy, the critically important job of implementation on the ground is the sole responsibility of the Regional Fisheries Boards with co-ordination and specialist support from the Central Board. This is a very ambitious and important initiative and the Regional Boards must be complemented on the manner in which they have worked with the sector in ensuring it is such a great success.

In 2004 the Central Board submitted the findings of the public consultation initiative on the Indecon report to the then Minister, which had been requested by him. The Indecon report sets out policy options and recommendations on future salmon management. The Board has recommended implementation of these recommendations.

The education pack for primary schools was rolled out in many schools around the country and Blackrock Education Centre together with the Dun Laoghaire Institute of Technology, Art and Design developed and launched a website, www.somethingfishy.ie, based on the pack. It has proved a great success and is being actively utilized by many schools at present. The website, which uses interactive games, quizzes and activities, helps to reinforce what they learn from their teacher in class. The website was nominated for two awards at the Digital Media Awards.

During the year, 680,000 brown trout, 327,000 rainbow trout and 18,000 carp were reared at our fish farms at Roscrea and Mullingar. These were stocked out to angling centers all around the country during the year.

The Board continues to provide coordination and specialist research and development services to the regional boards. The Board is also working with Waterways Ireland, EPA, Dúchas, ESB and our colleagues in Northern Ireland to advance priority projects. These projects cover areas such as the Water Framework Directive, development of our canals, support for flood relief schemes and the impact of hydro stations on fish movements.

Finally, I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Minister, his officials, my staff, Chairman and Board Members for their commitment and support over the last year. I would also like to acknowledge the support and meaningful achievements of my colleagues in the Regional Boards.



John O'Connor
Chief Executive Officer
April 2005

Central Fisheries Board

Research

The 2004 Research Programme as set out in our Business Plan was delivered in full. The Business Plan included the provision of a national research programme for the Regional Fisheries Boards reflecting agreed priorities for the year.

The key research areas were:

1) National Inland Fisheries Research, Development & Advisory Service

The preparation of a highly visual and detailed training manual on the restoration of salmonid riverine channels in Ireland continued. The production of this book will provide a useful tool to fisheries staff, engineers and people with an interest in fisheries management.

Consultancy work regarding Riverine enhancement programmes was undertaken on behalf of various private and public agencies/companies. Channel reaches in Counties Louth, Meath, Dublin, Wicklow, Limerick, Galway and Sligo were designed on behalf of the Regional Fisheries Boards and the board also assisted the Loughs Agency, Office of Public Works, the E.S.B. and Intel in relation to designing and/or implementing salmonid riverine enhancement programmes.

A comprehensive biological survey of the Suir catchment commenced in 2004 and further work is set to continue in 2005. Once the survey has been completed, invaluable information will be available on salmon, trout and other fish species in the area.

The status of fish stocks in selected reaches of the Moy were reviewed and monitoring of key sites continued providing data to compare and contrast results from previous surveys.

A number of fish stock assessments were conducted on a range of lakes nationwide including; Lough O'Flynn, Lough Cutra, Lough Sheelin, Lough Ennell and Lough Gill in the course of the year. This work provided an insight into the biological changes that appear to be occurring throughout our lakes. These changes are a result of a number of factors including; eutrophication, invasive species and water quality.

A series of lectures and field excursions were provided as part of the new fisheries Sligo IT Course. The main areas of focus were the restoration of salmonid riverine channels and GIS.

The Waterways Ireland commissioned Inland Fisheries Development Programme continued in 2004. Water quality in the Royal, Grand and Barrow Canals, the River Barrow Navigation and the Shannon Erne Waterway was monitored on a quarterly basis and a detailed report on the findings was presented to Waterways Ireland. Pollution incidents and fish kills were responded to and measures taken to ensure prevention of repeat offences. As part of the programme a comprehensive aquatic weed control programme for the Waterways was formulated and its execution by Waterways Ireland staff was supervised. Persistent weed problems were examined and appropriate control measures recommended. Electrical fishing and netting operations were employed to assess the fish stock status of a number of key angling centres on the Waterways. A detailed stocking programme was formulated and in excess of 1.5 tonnes of mixed coarse fish was introduced into designated sections. The performance of the stocked fish was monitored. The movements of bream in the lower River Barrow were tracked using acoustic telemetry. New and highly detailed customer friendly angling maps were produced for four high profile coarse angling centres on the canals and River Barrow.

Work on the development of a national policy for carp and carp angling commenced. A review group comprising of Fisheries Board staff was established.

Work continued on the production of a Photographic Guide to the Identification of Aquatic Plant Species.

The CFB was represented at the biennial EIFAC meeting in Wiersba, Poland.

2) National Fish Stock Assessment Programme

Work commenced in 2004 on a new European Union funded project, the *Atlantic Salmon Arc Project (ASAP)* which aims to identify individual salmon stocks genetically in countries across Europe. Samples of juvenile salmon were taken from 15 Irish river stocks in 2004. The Atlantic Salmon Arc Project (2004-2007) will allow Irelands discrete salmon populations to be identified and these stocks can be managed in a sustainable manner to ensure their long-term viability.

Year 2 of the EU funded salmon and sea trout research programme – ‘Sustainable Management of Interaction between Aquaculture and Wild Salmonid Fish’ – was completed in 2004, in collaboration with the WRFB.

Regarding the National Sea Trout /Sea Lice Monitoring Programme, sampling was carried out on 15 rivers along the south, west and north-west coasts in 2004. Highest mean intensity of sea lice

was recorded from sea trout in rivers discharging into Bertraghboy Bay, Killary Harbour, Ballinakill Bay and Kenmare Bay. Rivers where high sea lice levels were recorded on sea trout were in close proximity to marine salmon farms as documented previously.

Investigations began in spring 2004 on sea lice infestation on salmon smolts in aquaculture bays. Outward migrating salmon smolts with low infestations of juvenile sea lice were recorded in surface survey nets migrating through Killary Harbour. Unlike sea trout post-smolts, which return to freshwater with heavy sea lice infestations, migrating salmon smolts do not return to freshwater. This is the first record of sea lice infesting salmon smolts in Ireland.

Aspects of the Cork Harbour draft net salmon fishery were again investigated in 2004. The study revealed that the catch of salmon, the average size, the by-catch and level of net damage was similar at two locations for nylon and monofilament nets. A report was prepared for the South-Western Regional Fisheries Board.

A study, commissioned by the ESB, of the investigation of salmon smolt entrainment/impingement at six ESB estuarine Thermal Generating Stations began in spring 2004.

Fish stock surveys were conducted on the River Shannon at Carrick-on-Shannon and Banagher, at the request of the ShRFB. A preliminary survey of coarse fish stocks was conducted on Inniscarra Reservoir for the SWRFB.

3) Water Framework Directive

The CFB continued delivery of the national requirements of the Water Framework Directive in regard to fish in transitional waters. Staff from the Research and Sea Angling areas within CFB and staff from the ERFB surveyed Rogerstown and Broadmeadow Estuaries for Fingal Co. Council. A survey on Tralee Bay was commenced with staff of SWRFB but had to be curtailed due to adverse weather conditions.

Staff of CFB attended meetings and contributed to the work of the UK - Rol working group on WFD implementation for fish in Transitional Waters. This group was further developed in 2004 with active involvement of colleagues from France, Belgium and Netherlands.

The Board continued its active participation on National Committees, Technical Working Groups and River Basin District Steering Committees. 2004, was a busy year compiling the Characterisation Report for submission to the EU by the December deadline.

The EPA ERTDI project, which concluded in 2004, shows a relationship between fish populations and water quality. The report, currently in draft form, is nearing completion.

The Board is part of a consortium which was awarded a contract under INTERREG III to progress the Water Framework Directive in the North South Shared Aquatic Resource (N/S Share) area. The Central Fisheries Board, with the assistance of the Northern and Eastern Regional Fisheries Boards together with DARDNI and Fisheries agencies in Northern Ireland are required to develop an ecological classification scheme for lakes using fish populations.

4) National Fisheries Environment and Biodiversity Programme

Research on the impacts of drainage maintenance on aquatic vegetation, coarse fish, protected fish species (Habitats Directive, Annex II) and on management of marginal tree cover continued in 2004. Survey work was carried in a number of OPW catchments with the assistance of the Regional Fisheries Boards.

A training programme on environmentally sensitive drainage maintenance, developed by CFB with RFB assistance, was presented to officers of NRFB at the request of that Board. The CFB assisted SRFB in its discussions with the Barrow Drainage Board in regard to implementation of fisheries and habitat sensitivities into routine maintenance practise.

Scientific studies were conducted on 'non-angling' species such as shad, smelt and lamprey, all of which are protected fish species under the Habitats Directive or under national legislation. These species are of major conservation importance in the context of biodiversity.

A study to establish a baseline on the status of lamprey in the R. Barrow SAC was undertaken during summer – autumn 2004. This study, funded by National Parks and Wildlife Service of DEHLG, was carried out with the Southern Regional Fisheries Boards. A second NPWS-funded study compiled baseline information on distribution and status of juvenile lamprey in a number of Hydrometric Areas throughout the country.

Investigations in the Nore catchment, funded by the OPW under the River Nore (Kilkenny City) Flood Relief, continued in 2004. A baseline on juvenile lamprey populations was established in sections of the River Nore main channel and in the River Erkina and River Dinin.

The CFB continued its investigations on smelt with SRFB in 2004. Sampling was conducted in the upper reaches of the estuaries of the Suir, Nore and Barrow and ripe smelt were captured in all three waters.

A commissioned Inland Waterways Fisheries Development Programme for Waterways Ireland continued in 2003. As part of the programme water quality throughout the Royal, Grand and Barrow Canals, the River Barrow Navigation and the Shannon-Erne Waterway was monitored on a quarterly basis. A management programme for aquatic and riparian vegetation was formulated and its execution by Waterways Ireland supervised and evaluated. The fish stocks of many angling sections within the waterways were monitored and stocking programmes developed. The movements and migrations of key coarse angling species in selected stretches were monitored using acoustic telemetry.

Preliminary work on a programme for Bord na Mona, in cooperation with the NWRFB, was conducted in the Owenmore River catchment. The programme aims to evaluate the efficacy of peat silt removal operations in the salmonid spawning rivers in this important fishery.

The distribution and status of a number of invasive alien plant species, both aquatic and riparian, was monitored. These plants have the potential to rapidly overgrow habitats into which they are introduced, often with seriously detrimental ecological consequences. Surveys were conducted on the River Inny to investigate reports that chub, a fish species alien to Ireland, were present in the watercourse. No specimens were captured.

Two scientific papers on invasive coarse fish species were presented at the international Invasive Species meeting convened in Ennis.

Fish Kills

A total of 43 fish kills were recorded nationally during 2004, compared to 72 in 2003. Mortalities of coarse fish fry continued during the summer months in Lough Oughter, Co. Cavan. Four fish kill incidents were recorded on the Avoca River, resulting from the acid mine leachate toxicity problem in 2004. A significant mortality of juvenile trout and salmon occurred in the Barrow, downstream of Portarlinton in July and dead fish were recorded on four separate instances in the Barrow line of the Grand Canal downstream of Athy. An incident on the Bracken/Owenavorrigh system in September caused significant mortalities of salmon and trout.

The principal causes of the fish kills in 2004 were Eutrophication 13, Agriculture 8, Local Authorities 5, Industry 2; various other factors accounted for 8 instances and in 7 occasions the cause was unknown.

Laboratory Service

In 2004, 5255 water samples from rivers and lakes were analysed for nutrients and other properties. The monthly breakdown by Fisheries Regions is presented in Table... The longterm monthly monitoring of 14 selected lakes continued in 2004. The majority of waters showed no change in quality compared to previous years. Reductions in algal crops and improved water clarity were noted for Lough Sheelin and Lough Arrow but both of these lakes are now heavily infested with zebra mussels the likely cause of the observed "improvement".

Marketing

The Central and Regional Fisheries Boards continued to progress the National Marketing Strategy in partnership with Failte Ireland. Reviews were carried out on the three separate research documents in order to agree on a strategic plan moving forward. The National Marketing Strategy is to be completed in 2005. Regular press releases were syndicated on a number of key areas including the First Salmon of the Year and the rescue of 10,000 fish from the Grand Canal, Dublin. Daily press coverage updates were syndicated from the CFB to all boards to ensure all staff were aware of the key issues within the fisheries sector.

Promotion of angling was targeted at the following key sectors:

1) Sea Angling

The 2004 sea-angling season was generally a good despite mixed weather. Visitor numbers held up extremely well despite the apparent downward trend in other areas of tourism.

In the Cork Harbour area no less than three new Irish records were set ; Ling of 55lbs by Ailbhe O'Sullivan on 3rd January, Golden Grey Mullet of 2lbs 8ozs by Noel Lane on 11th July and a Blonde Ray of 37 lbs by Paul Tennant on 10th October. A further Irish record for a red mullet of 1.26lbs was set at Kilmore Quay, Co. Wexford by local charter skipper Eamon Hayes on 30th September.

Catches of haddock continued to increase but the disappearance of cod from many areas and the serious decline in blue shark numbers is giving serious cause for concern. Blue shark figures were down on the previous year giving a figure of 0.73 blue shark per boat on shark angling days.

Sea Angling Logbook Statistics 1978 – 2004

The number of charter skippers who completed an angling logbook was 105, an increase of one from the previous year. The number of rod days was 42,518, down 3,000 on 2003 and this was due to unsuitable weather conditions in August and September. Ireland remains the largest group at 51%, followed by the U.K. at 20% and the Dutch at 19%.

Marine Sport Fish Tagging Programme

Over 70 charter skippers and a few dedicated anglers took part in the 2004 Marine Sport fish Tagging Programme. Over 1,000 fish were tagged and released including blue shark, tope, monkfish, common skate and ray. Since 1970, a total of 36,587 have been tagged and released including 17,419 blue shark. This programme is now the largest of its kind in Europe and the second largest in the world after the U.S.A.

Promotion

Sea Angling in Ireland featured regularly in the international press with much column space being given to the developing small boat angling and saltwater fly-fishing. These “newer” products are creating a lot of overseas interest and look set to become established as future growth areas.

2) Coarse and Pike Angling

As in the previous year, Roach and Roach Bream Hybrid catches continue to be the main type of catch recorded by home and visiting anglers mainly from the UK. Bream were scarce in the Lower Shannon catchments. In April 2004 two UK visitors recorded over 1000 lbs. of bream in a bay in North Lough Derg in one day. The River Barrow continued to fish well for specimen perch. The Ballyhoe lakes fished well for specimen bream and tench. Lough Derravarragh fished well for specimen roach bream hybrids as well as producing some of the biggest lake pike of the year of over 30 lbs.

It was a very good year for pike fishing in general with the Rivers Suck, Inny, Barrow and Shannon regularly producing fish over the specimen weight of 20 lbs. Pike angling also continues to grow in popularity with Irish anglers. The Irish Federation of Pike angling clubs reported very good competitions for Pike at most venues throughout the country.

3) Game Angling

2004 was a season of contrasting features in Game Angling.

Salmon

The season opened on 1st January and started off reasonably well with an encouraging run of spring salmon. Catches improved month by month. There were good runs of fish in March and this continued into April and May. At least one fishery had an all-time-record catch of multi-seawinter fish and the majority of spring fisheries were well pleased with their performance.

In contrast, the summer runs of grilse were well below average on the majority of fisheries with a lot of small net marked fish. A limited number of rivers got a good run of grilse which lasted well into July, e.g., the Galway Fishery.

Sea Trout

Sea trout runs, with a few notable exceptions, were very poor. This coincided with very poor lice control on nearby fish farms. Angling on most of the traditional seatrout tourist fisheries is in serious decline and some are effectively non-existent.

Brown Trout Loughs

Lough Mask performed best of the great Western loughs. Lough Corrib, after a promising start disappointed during the Mayfly season and anglers complained of the poor Mayfly hatch. The number of anglers fishing Lough Conn and Lough Carra appear to have declined. Corrib, Mask and Conn are showing signs of increased eutrophication and require urgent action to reverse the trend.

The performance of the Midland lakes of Sheelin, Ennell and Owel was disappointing but Lough Ree is showing signs of a revival in its trout stocks.

Brown Trout Rivers

Water and weather conditions were reasonably favourable throughout the season. The fishing was on a par or marginally better than previous seasons. Anglers complained most of the small average size of trout which may very well be due to over exploitation of stocks by anglers themselves.

Angling Promotion

The Irish Angling Update was produced regularly during the angling season with angling reports being supplied from the Regional Fisheries Boards and other tourism angling sources. It is circulated to Tourism Ireland offices worldwide, Irish and foreign angling journalists, angling tour operators and the tourist angling trade in Ireland.

The CFB took part in a number of trade shows at home and abroad during 2004. These included the National Angling Show in Swords, The Young Scientist Exhibition as well as events in conjunction with Tourism Ireland in the UK, Europe and the US.

Protection & Conservation

Now in its fourth year, the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme was again successfully implemented, monitored and enforced by the Fisheries Service. The CFB coordinated an integrated service in the protection and conservation area by the Regional Boards, the Naval Service, the Garda Síochána and the Air Corps. The Naval Service, as well as providing patrol days, also provide training for Fishery Officers in sea survival, fire fighting and as coswains. The Garda Síochána supplied personnel to partake in naval service patrols as back up to Fisheries Officers.

Details of the L.P.V Naval and Air Corps Operations during 2004:

Sea Patrols

	Days on Patrol	No. of Sightings & Licence Checks	Length of Net Seized (Yards)	No of Prosecutions & Warnings
Bradán Beatha	140	388	3000	4
Cosantóir Bradán	144	479	7500	9
Naval Service	64	180	4750	3
Total	348	1047	15250	16

Air Corps Patrols

Number of Flights	16
Number of Sightings	500

*The above figures reflect an increase of 25% for the number of sightings & licence checks and an increase of 28% for the length of net seized.

Wild Salmon and Seatrout Tagging Report 2003/4

The Board published the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme Fisheries Statistics Report 2003-2004. This report contains data relating to the 2004 commercial salmon fishing seasons and the 2003 angling seasons. The coordination and collection of the catch statistics on salmon and sea trout exploitation is a strategic management tool aimed at contributing to the long-term sustainability of these species. The main findings are as follows:

Commercial

- 1 The National Catch of 145,253 was 16,698 below the National Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 161,951.
- 2 All district catches were below the district Total Allowable Catch, except for Lismore.
- 3 In excess of 99% of commercial logbooks were returned by commercial fishermen.

- 4 85.9% of the commercial salmon catch was sold through licensed salmon dealers and other sales, 7.6% were accounted for by domestic consumption and 6.5% was unaccounted for by the time logbooks were returned.

Angling

- 1 31,809 angling licenses were sold in 2003, 57% of logbooks were returned to the Regional Fisheries Boards, compared with 52% in 2002 and 43% in 2001.
- 2 Anglers from 42 different countries held rod licences in 2003. 55% were from the Republic of Ireland, 12.9% from Northern Ireland, 14.6% of anglers from the UK, England, Wales & Scotland. French and German anglers made up 3.1% and 2.5% of rod license holders respectively.
- 3 The river Moy in County Mayo provided the largest number of salmon to the rod with a raised catch of 6,908.

Catch by all Sectors

- 1 The total number of salmon captured by all methods including angling in 2003 was 187,762.
- 2 In 2004, 83.8% of the exploited salmon were captured by drift nets, 13.5% by draft nets, 2.7% by other engines.

Recreational Angling Ireland (RAI)

Recreational Angling Ireland, established by the Central Fisheries Board and the Irish Sports Council to harness the angling voluntary sector to advance matters of mutual interest, developed an ambitious business plan under the chairmanship of Peter Wilson. The RAI ran a number of highly successful youth angling events in 2004 including eight very successful youth angling events at Rathbeggan; Galway; Crover House; Millstreet Country Park; Cathedral Beat, Ballina; Carrick-on-Suir; Newry Canal and Corca Park.

Fish Farms

The Board's fish farms, located in Roscrea and Mullingar, had another successful year. The farms stocked out 680,000 brown trout and 327,000 rainbow trout to the Regional Boards' managed lakes, to angling club waters and to private angling operations. A total of 18,000 carp at various stages of growth were stocked out to 24 different coarse fisheries. These stockings are a vital component in supporting the Regional Boards and angling industry in developing and promoting angling tourism

Finance / IT

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

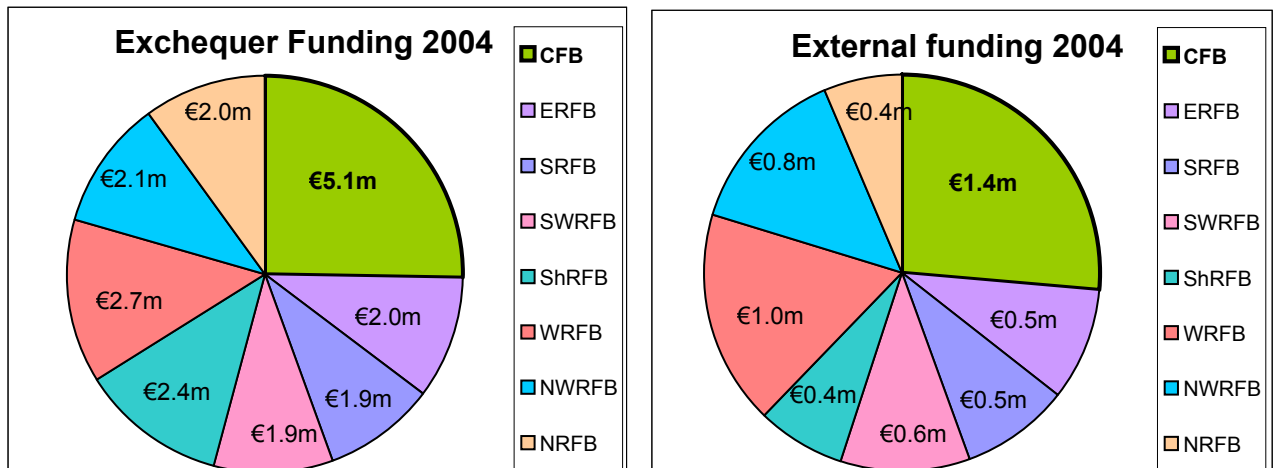
1 General Financial Management

The 2004 accounts incorporated the Chairman's statement of internal financial control, as required under paragraph 10.2(iii) of the Code of practice for the governance of State bodies.

To comply with Financial Reporting Standard FRS 17, the Board engaged an actuary to value the liability of the Board's Defined Benefit Superannuation Scheme. The results of the valuations are noted in the 2004 accounts for each of the Fisheries Boards

2 Funding for 2004

In 2004, the Fisheries Boards received an exchequer grant of €20.1 million, of which Pay costs amounted to €16.5 million or 82% of the total grant received. €1.8 million was allocated to national programmes, which were co-ordinated by the CFB. The Boards also generated €5.6 million from other sources which was reinvested in the management, conservation and protection of Inland Fisheries.



3 Financial Accounts

The financial accounts for 2003 were presented for Audit to the Comptroller and Auditor General in March 2004.

PROPERTY MANAGEMENT

In 2004, an accommodation plan for the CFB HQ was developed and implementation commenced with the relocation of the CFB main office to Swords Business Campus. The co-operation of staff in effecting the move resulted in all systems, operations and interim dual-location procedures being fully implemented over two weekends.

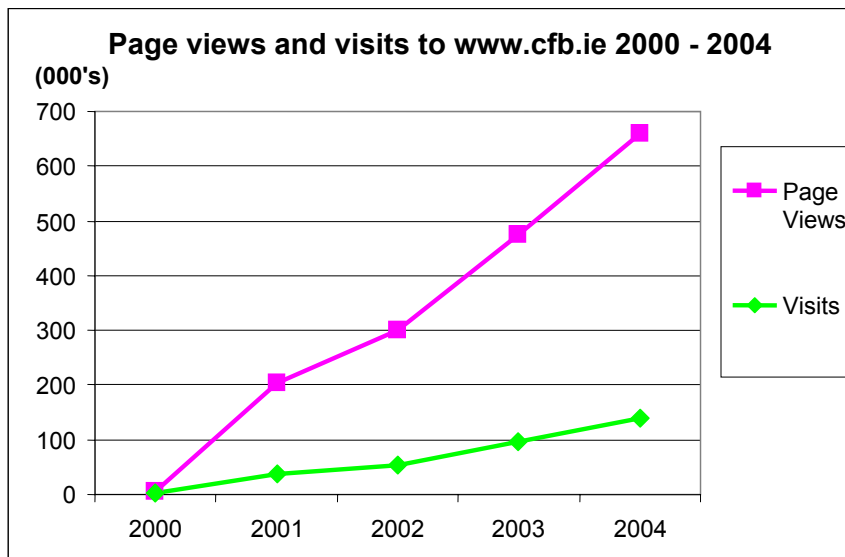
INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

4 ICT Systems

In 2004, with the assistance of external consultants, the ICT systems of the CFB were upgraded in line with best practice. The roll-out of new and enhanced ICT policies and procedures was completed. A major ICT strategy / knowledge management project commenced in 2004 and is due for delivery in mid 2005.

5 Website

Once more, traffic to the CFB website showed a dramatic increase over the previous year.



Apart from the comprehensive Game, Sea, River Trout, Pike and Coarse fishing sections of the site, the Irish Angling Update, the Irish Tackle Shop, Charter Boat Directories are major factors in attracting visitors. Although the vast majority of regular users of the site are UK, European or American, anglers from over 103 countries accessed the site in 2004. Fly fishers, coarse anglers and deep sea fishermen from many countries such as Argentina, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar and Venezuela regularly use this online resource for its angling, research and fisheries content. The website continues to be a remarkably successful marketing tool for Irish angling abroad and in raising the profile of the CFB at home and amongst its international peers.

6 Library Management

The CFB holds many historical, valuable and varied sources of information which are held in paper format. To complement the ICT / knowledge management project, a library management initiative was initiated in November 2004. This project will see the cataloguing and management of all material / information held by the CFB and ultimately will evolve into a web-based retrieval system.

Human Resources

Training & Development

The Central & Regional Fisheries Boards (C&RFB's) continued their National Targeted Training Programme in 2004 with an investment of €230k. The plan was developed with input from all Boards and addressed the key developmental and training needs of the organisation.

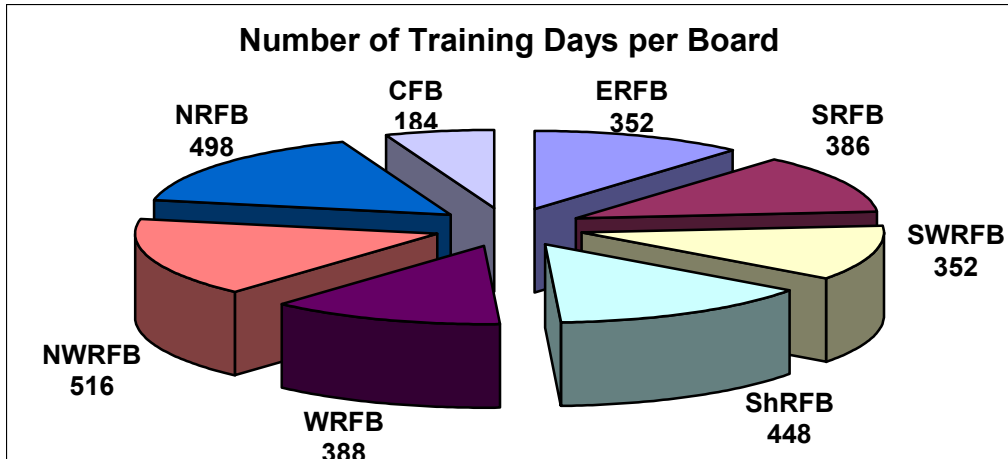
The key areas of development and training addressed in the national training plan were:

- 1 the final phase of the PMDS cycle – the Annual Review of Performance training;
- 2 Health & Safety training, e.g., First Aid, Manual Handling, Safety rep. Water Safety, etc.;
- 3 Job Skills development such as ISA approved Powerboat training, LPV training, Conflict Resolution, Equality training for newly elected DCPs, Microsoft Office skills;
- 4 Third level education support in the Higher National Certificate in Fisheries Management and other programmes;
- 5 Management Development.

The first run of the Higher National Certificate in Fisheries Management courses was successfully completed in December 2004 at the Institute of Technology in Sligo by 15 mature students drawn from the Regional Fisheries Boards. The Fisheries Service provided a significant expert input to the course with many lectures on key subjects given by specialists from within the organisation. The students will graduate in November 2005. The second cohort is due to commence the course in January 2005.

Other key training events in 2004 included the development of 16 staff to become ISA approved instructors for the delivery of Powerboat Level 2 training to all staff.

The total training days for the C&RFB's for 2004 was 3,124 which was an average of 7 days per staff member, and an increase of 15% on last year.



Freedom of Information (FOI) 2004

There were 12 new requests for information made to the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards in 2003, under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 & 2003. The breakdown of requests was as follows:

- 1 Journalists: 1
- 2 Business/Interest Groups: 7
- 3 Staff: 2
- 4 Others: 2

The decisions made by the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards on the release of information under the FOI Acts 1997 & 2003 throughout 2004 were as follows:

- 1 42% Granted
- 2 33% Part-granted
- 3 17% Refused
- 4 8% Handled outside FOI.

Employee Relations

2004 saw further progress being made with the Trade Unions across a range of issues. These included the following:

- 1 the resolution of the long running matter of an accommodation relocation for the Central Fisheries Board from Glasnevin to Swords.
- 2 The issue of employment status of various grades of long-term temporary staff, which was addressed in the context of the cap on employment numbers announced by the Minister for Finance in Dec 2002.

- 3 The advancement of a new suite of policies, in conjunction with Management and the Trade Unions which will form part of the new Employee Handbook.
- 4 The modernisation agenda under Sustaining Progress, with input from management and unions.
- 5 A separate 'parallel benchmarking' process negotiated with SIPTU in relation to General Operative Grades.

Equality

The process of appointing designated contact persons in each of the Boards was completed. Introductory and refresher training was carried out to assist them in the performance of their role under the Equality Policy.

Equal opportunities continues to feature highly on the HR agenda and the Board will fulfill it's commitment to review its Equal Opportunities policy every three years, in 2005.

Health & Safety

Specific activities covered during 2004 included:

- 1 A review of the CFB safety statement
- 2 H&S audit at the Swords Business Campus to ensure compliance with H&S, Fire and Building Regulations, prior to moving
- 3 H&S issues prioritized in relation to retention of the lab facilities in Glasnevin.
- 4 Management of the H&S aspects of the move to Swords
- 5 Roll out of a vaccination programme for all relevant staff within the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards
- 6 A review of LPV operations as specified in the 2004 Modernisation / Sustaining Progress Agreement and a risk assessment of the safety implications of Management's proposal commenced. An initial inspection visit took place and a consultative process was initiated.

Central Fisheries Board

Unaudited Income and Expenditure Account for the 12 months to 31 December 2004

	Notes	2004	2003
		€	€
Income			
Oireachtas Income	1	4,478,286	4,356,639
Other Income	2	<u>2,355,358</u>	<u>1,459,617</u>
		6,833,644	5,816,256
Transfer from/ (to) Capital Account	10	<u>1,211.00</u>	<u>(97,118)</u>
		6,834,855	5,719,138
Expenditure			
Administration	3	2,806,594	2,252,267
Operations	4	4,108,884	3,674,020
		<u>6,915,478</u>	<u>5,926,287</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		(80,624)	(207,149)
Surplus at 1 January		<u>(92,266)</u>	<u>111,883</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 December		<u>(172,890)</u>	<u>(95,266)</u>

The Board has no gains or losses in the financial year or the preceding financial year other than those dealt with in the Income and Expenditure Account. The results for the year relate to continuing operations.

Regional Fisheries Boards

Eastern Regional Fisheries Board

General

The Board had a successful year in 2004 and continued to make progress on developing conserving, promoting and managing the Region's fisheries. The year was characterised as moderate in the first half of the year with low rainfall and much sunshine. However the latter months of the year was dominated by high winds and rainfall which led to the flooding of many waters in the Region.

Fisheries Management and Conservation

Electro fishing works were carried out on many of the Region's rivers and in total fish stocks were monitored on the majority of rivers in the Region. Spawning levels were stable with an increase on the Slaney, Boyne, Dee, Glyde and Fane from 2003. The Derry river had very good spawning levels in 2004 whilst they remained similar on the Liffey. The high water levels made conditions difficult to ascertain exact spawning levels.

Instream and spawning enhancement works took place on 7 rivers in the Region in 2004, with a total investment of €20,500. Over 9km of rivers and streams were developed and this included works on the Liffey, Boro, Slaney, Fane, Dee, Glyde and the Boyne tributaries. This includes the completion of the cross border salmonid enhancement project which started in 2003 for the River Fane.

The Board in partnership with the Northern Regional Fisheries Board and the Fisheries Conservancy Board N. I. successfully applied for INTERREG 3a funds. The Board received €157k which was used in the purchase of equipment ranging from a vehicle, boats, computers, GIS/GPS units to nets. The Board is now in a strong position to enhance its delivery of services and management information systems. The Board also secured funding under the Peace II programme for the improved access and angling structures at nine Monaghan fisheries, 7 providing additional/safer car parking and 2 catering for the needs of disabled anglers.

10 angling facility enhancement projects took place with a total investment of €183,250 creating 20 additional angling spaces. Specific projects included enhancement works on the Rivers Tolka, Slaney, Fane, Dee, Monaghan Blackwater and tributaries of the Boyne - Enfield Blackwater and Garr rivers. Structures were maintained and replaced throughout the Region where necessary.

Advances were made in implementing protocols with other agencies covering protection of fisheries habitat during drainage maintenance works and road works in the Region.

There was a reduction as in recent years, in illegal fishing detections with fewer incidences on inland or tidal waters. 1,222 man hours were completed on carrying out sea patrols and inland boat patrols in 2004. This can be attributed to declining salmon stocks, support of the courts on prosecutions and anglers efforts in protecting their fisheries.

Over the last number of years there has been a marked increase in the number of incidences in relation to anglers in breach of coarse fish byelaws and the widespread killing of coarse fish. This continued in 2004, with many incidences occurring in the lakes of Counties Cavan, Monaghan and Meath and the Grand and Royal Canals in Dublin and Kildare. One stake net was seized on Lough Ramor which contained a number of coarse fish, long lines were also retrieved in the north east. The Board is concerned at the increased numbers of coarse fish being killed, especially specimen fish.

The Slaney Rivers Trust project was established in 2004, following the allocation of €221,000 in EU funding under the Interreg IIIA Ireland – Wales programme. Its purpose is to conserve and enhance fish stocks through habitat restoration and protection, promote healthy outdoors recreation and environmental education, and to develop and market angling and recreational tourism opportunities on the Slaney River. This is the Irish side of the Celtic Rivers Trust Partnership project of which the Board is a partner.

Environmental Management and Control

2004 was a year of rapid economic growth in Ireland with the expansion of the house building industry and the restarting of some infrastructural development projects which had been on hold since 2002. Further advances were made in the degree of consultation between the local authorities and developers and the Board with regard to projects which had fisheries implications. To assist in this consultation process, a set of guidelines were published by the Board which aim to identify the likely impact on fisheries habitat in the course of construction and development work and to outline practical measures for the avoidance and mitigation of damage.

The Board carried out investigations in relation to environmental issues and assessing the potential impacts of developments on fishery habitats. 605 submissions were made to the relevant local authorities in relation to planning applications, which may impact on fisheries. Most of these related to housing and road developments, water and wastewater projects,

environmental licences, forestry and windfarm guidelines. 4 submissions were made relating to IPC licences and 12 relating to Waste Management applications.

354 reports of an environmental nature were received at the Boards offices and investigated during 2004. As a result of these inspections 8 prosecutions were initiated during the year. 11 fish kill incidences occurred, 4 of which were on the Avoca river. One of the worst pollution incidences during the year occurred on the Owenavarragh river, where over 3,000 salmonids and numerous lamprey were killed.

Safety, Health and Welfare at work

Safety continued to be of paramount importance within the Board. Two staff completed the Fishery Management Diploma course in the Sligo Regional Technical College. All staff attended PMDS training (phase 3) in 2004 which completes the PMDS training for the Board.

Catchment Management

Implementation of the Avoca Restoration plan continued in 2004, with a heightened profile of the plan with press, radio and TV coverage on RTE's TV Programme Nationwide, which generated huge publicity and interest. This resulted in an industrial company (Schering Plough) sponsoring an element of the Boards's water quality monitoring programme to the amount of €3,000. Two dataloggers were purchased and one installed at Tigroney adit in 2004, for the purpose of gathering flow information data.

Consultations with stakeholders continued on the plan and a proposal was pursued with a number of Welsh partners to submit a funding proposal for the Avoca under the Ireland / Wales Interreg programme (3A). The purpose of this is to develop the mining heritage element of Avoca and Amlwch with a pilot plant for remediation of acid mine drainage at both sites.

Marketing and Promotion of Angling

Overall angling was reported as good for most of the season, with weather conditions towards the end of the year making conditions difficult.

Salmon and sea trout angling was reported as fair, whilst and brown trout angling was reported as good throughout the Region. Anglers accounted for 1,056 salmon and sea trout (over 40cm) in 2004 ** (*Figure is based on angling returns at time of writing, which is approximately 62%*). Of this the catch for salmon was 1,034 and 22 for sea trout. Coarse and pike fishing was reported as very good with the lakes of Cavan and Monaghan producing specimen bream and tench. 12 of the 16 specimen tench caught in Ireland in 2004 were captured on Ballyhoe Lake and 2 specimen

bream (certified) were also caught here. Sea angling was reported as fair for the year due to unfavourable weather conditions for a large part of the season. However there were good catches along the Wicklow and Wexford coastline including specimen tope in Dundalk Bay.

The Board attended 11 successful angling promotions at home and abroad in 2004. Press and media coverage during the year was very successful with a total of 66 items of coverage. This included editorial coverage in a number of overseas publications which greatly boosts the development of tourism angling in the Region. The Board's website increased in popularity with over 15,000 unique users who viewed more than 60,000 pages.

The Dublin Angling Initiative continued to focus its activities on education and awareness of angling to young people and improving fisheries in the greater Dublin area. 2004 saw a slight change of direction. With the opening of a number of put and take fisheries in recent years, (Corkagh Park in Clondalkin being the most recent in 2004), these facilities can now provide the basic angling skills to 'first time anglers'. This provides DAI with the opportunity to concentrate its efforts into providing advanced angling skills to young people. As a result more fishing clubs were established and youth workers were trained by the DAI. Workshops were held throughout the year, a number of which were for young people through Recreational Angling Ireland.

Board Fisheries

There was a slight increase in the number of permits issued on Board Fisheries during the year. There was approximately 5,221 rod days on the Board's waters this year with €4,000 revenue created. 800 brown trout and rainbows were released into Emy and Bracken Lakes during the angling season.

The Eastern Fisheries Development Society met 6 times in 2004. The Society received applications for grant in aid from 7 angling clubs and associations. Grant in aid totalling €2,809 was allocated to the society.

Commercial Fisheries

In relation to commercial fishing, the total allowable catch (TAC) for the Region for salmon and sea trout in 2004 was 6,472. The total reported commercial catch for the year was 4,252. This represents an increase in the reported catch of 27% from 2003, when the total reported catch was 3,339. However, since the introduction of the salmon tagging scheme in 2001 there has been an overall decrease of 30% when the total reported catch was 6,076.

Of this, the commercial catch for salmon was 3,529, representing the 27% increase since 2003. This increase was reflected fairly evenly in all districts. The commercial catch for sea trout (over 40cm) was 723, representing a very slight decrease since 2003. These figures are in line with a continuing trend over the last ten years or so and the total reported catch for the region constitutes less than 2.5% of the national reported catch for salmon and sea trout.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture continues to be carried out in parts of the region particularly Dundalk Bay and Wicklow and Wexford on the South East coast. There was an increase in the number of boats involved in harvesting cockles in Dundalk Bay. This fishery is currently unregulated and is being investigated by the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

The Eastern Regional Fisheries Board

Unaudited Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31 December 2004

Income	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2004</u> €	<u>2003</u> €
Oireachtas Income	1	2,065,216	1,854,389
Other Income	2	<u>518,286</u>	<u>285,730</u>
		2,583,502	2,140,119
Transfer (to) / from Capital Account	11	<u>(33,575)</u>	<u>49,295</u>
		2,549,927	2,189,414
Expenditure			
Administration	3	612,831	544,574
Operations	4	<u>1,856,297</u>	<u>1,692,694</u>
		2,469,128	2,237,268
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		80,799	(47,854)
Surplus/(Deficit) at 1 January		<u>54,386</u>	<u>102,240</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 December		<u>135,184</u>	<u>54,386</u>

The Board had no gains or losses in the financial year or the preceding financial year other than those dealt with in the Income and Expenditure Account. The results of the year relate to continuing operations.

Southern Regional Fisheries Board

Corporate Governance

The Comptroller and Auditor General's office carried out its annual audit of the Board's financial operations and systems and all recommendations are being implemented. The Audit Committee met three times during 2004 and its minutes and recommendations were adopted each time by the Board. An Internal Audit was also conducted during the year and its report and recommendations were duly circulated and implemented. The Board is aware and its members fully compliant with the provisions of the standards in the Ethics in Public Office Acts 1995 – 2001 and also the SI No. 699 of 2004, Ethics in Public Office (Prescribed Public Bodies, Designated Directorships of Public Bodies and Designated positions in Public Bodies) Regulations, 2004. To comply with Financial Reporting Standards FRS 17, the Board engaged an actuary to value the liability of the Board's Defined Benefit Superannuation Scheme. The Results of the valuations are noted in the 2004 accounts for each of the Fisheries Boards.

Staff

The Board has a fulltime complement of 32 staff. The Board employed 5 temporary staff to carry out specific projects during 2004.

Health & Safety

A member of staff completed the Diploma in Health, Safety and Welfare at University College Dublin and was subsequently appointed to the South Eastern Regional Advisory Committee. 7 Accidents were reported with 2 staff off work for approx. 100 days in the period.

Southern Trout and Coarse Fisheries Development Society

The Southern Trout and Coarse Fisheries Development Society had another very successful year. Developments costing €170,438 were undertaken in the period. Funding of €83,891 was approved as a grant to be paid against 2003 expenditure. This Board, in conjunction with the

other Boards and the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources has been formulating new procedures to administer the Co-op operations; the final procedure will be available in 2005.

Board Lakes

The Board with Waterford City and County Trout Anglers Association has initiated a management plan for Ballyshunnock and Knockaderry Lakes. Revenue amounting to €3915 was collected and re-invested in the lakes. This arrangement has opened up the four Waterford reservoirs to local and visiting anglers alike.

Education and Training

All Board staff received appropriate training to carry out their duties safely and effectively. Two members of staff successfully completed the Fisheries Management Course at Sligo Institute of Technology.

Catchment Management

The Barrow Steering Group met 4 times during 2004, and it participated with the CFB who undertook a review of all the pilot catchment management programmes in the country. The group supported by the Boards executive publishes an annual newsletter on activities relating to the Barrow Catchment area.

Marketing and Promotion

The Board works closely with SERTA in developing and promoting angling in the region. The Boards website, after recent revamping, has started to play an extremely important part in attracting anglers to the Region.

EU Projects

The Board is actively participating in the Watertour Project with the Midland Regional Authority one of five partners in the EU. This is an INTERREG 111C project and is aimed at improving the competitiveness of SMEs and Regions involved in Water Tourism Activities by innovative strategies and technologies.

Salmon Management and Conservation

The TAC(quota) for the Waterford and Lismore Districts were co-ordinated and managed efficiently with very good co-operation from the stakeholders. A review of the Lismore Draft Setaside (2004 was the last of 5 years) was initiated and will be completed in early 2005. The return of anglers' logbooks at approximately 50% continues to be most disappointing. The Board is expending valuable resources in pursuing anglers to return logbooks so that accurate information is available for angling returns, which is essential for the effective management and conservation of Salmon.

Prosecutions

During 2004, 6 prosecutions were initiated along with a large number of On the Spot Fines being issued.

Catchment Management, Habitat and Environmental Quality

The Board continued to place particular emphasis on prevention and minimisation of pollution, and protection and improvement of the fisheries habitat. Throughout the region special attention was given to monitoring applications for planning permission submitted to local authorities. In many instances detailed recommendations were submitted advising the imposition of planning conditions necessary for protection of the fisheries environment. A number of planning decisions were successfully appealed to An Bord Pleanala. The lack of adequate sewage treatment facilities at many locations continued to be of concern, and in many instances local authorities were requested to upgrade treatment facilities. Of particular concern is the inadequacy of

sewage treatment plants at Buttevant, Doneraile, Newmarket, Tallow and Rathcormack in the Lismore District; and at Monasterevin, Castledermot, Gowran, Dunlavin, Derrinturn, Borris in Ossory, Freshford, Johnstown, Kells, Stonyford, Ballyhale, Mooncoin, Knocktopher, Newcastle and Kilmanaghan in the Waterford District. Because of lack of progress in many of these areas, the Board had to notify the local authorities concerned of our intention to object to the granting of any further planning permissions entailing increased loadings to sewer until such time as new or upgraded treatment facilities are installed. A large number of proposed afforestation, aerial fertilisation, tree felling and forest road construction proposals were vetted. The various Agencies and contractors concerned were advised on the carrying out of works in a 'fish friendly' manner with emphasis given to the installation of forest drainage networks with adequate settlement areas to minimise loss of silt and solids to waters. Developers were encouraged to plant broadleaves adjacent to waters to provide a combination of dapple, shade and a mixed insect food supply beneficial to the well being of the fisheries resource. Large-scale road improvement works entailing earth moving, construction of culverts and bridges across fishery waters and in some instances diversion of waters continued during the year. A generally high level of co-operation was received from the local authorities and contractors concerned. Draft licenses under the EPA and Water Pollution Acts together with licences under Waste Management legislation were reviewed where proposed discharges had potential to impact on the fisheries resource, and submissions made to the licensing authorities concerned. Enrichment of waters due to excess discharges of nutrients from local authority and industrial wastewater treatment plants together with losses from agriculture, peat bogs and forestry sites continues to be of concern.