



Inland Fisheries Ireland

Fish Stocking Guidance Document

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IFI Fish Stocking Guidance Document

This is a guidance document for fishery managers in relation to occasions when stockings of fish – both wild and hatchery reared are requested by Clubs and organisations from Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) or are proposed by IFI and the current IFI position on the matter.

Introduction:

Angling as a pastime is an important social, cultural and economic activity in Ireland. Historically anglers used to fish for sustenance but as Ireland became more developed in the twentieth century angling became regarded as a pastime while still acknowledging that, in certain parts of the country, the historic role of the lakes and rivers as a provider of food is still regarded as an important part of the local social history.

Angling in Ireland is an extremely valuable asset earning some €755m to the National economy annually. One of the greatest assets with fishing in Ireland is the fact that in many instances the fish are entirely of wild origin and self-sustaining and the goal of catching a truly wild fish can be both challenging and rewarding.

There are, however, instances whereby the stock of wild fish is either insufficient to sustain a recreational fishery or is lost and in such instances other methods of boosting a fish stock are, on occasion, called upon. These include hatchery reared fish in certain cases or translocated fish in others.

The current best scientific advice recommends that a fishery, in so far as is possible, is managed to self-sustain its populations of fish. The use of hatcheries, particularly with regard to supplementing wild fish populations, is not encouraged. There is significant genetic evidence to suggest that the introduction of hatchery reared fish to a wild fish population causes problems for the integrity of the wild stock and as such should not be encouraged.

Hatcheries do serve a purpose in instances where fish are provided as an angling quarry on a stock and crop basis.

Inland Fisheries Ireland also encounter instances where fish become available for transfer as a consequence of other operations such as rescue operations or other translocation activities.

The purpose of this document is to provide, in a very succinct manner, the options for different species from a translocation and stocking viewpoint in the key different types of fisheries in Ireland. Significant emphasis is placed on the historical practices of stocking.

The goal is to enable all fishery managers to be aware of the options available in their fishery and to ensure best practice is developed and promoted – inappropriate stocking

options should be clearly identifiable from the very outset by consulting the table attached to this document.

This document does not attempt to be a summary of all the current legislation in Ireland, it is an attempt to give the fishery manager some simple guidance on what is possible or not and in certain instances where advice should be sought prior to undertaking any stocking.

Guiding Principles:

Inland Fisheries Ireland recognises that the best fisheries are those that are maintained in pristine conditions with human influences minimised.

Maintaining the natural species and habitat profiles in all natural fisheries remains the priority.

Where a fishery is suffering degradation the priority is restoration and enabling the natural wild fish populations to recover. Every effort will be made to optimise the habitat and prevailing conditions to enable the wild fish repopulate the area in question from neighbouring waters.

All management activities should be based on the best scientific advice for these particular habitats and species.

The use of hatchery reared fish is regarded as the exception – except where the stocking of heavily modified water bodies are concerned (reservoirs and man-made water bodies particularly ones specifically constructed for angling).

There is a requirement for fish health clearance prior to stocking of fish.

The options for stocking are outlined in the following table - (Table 1).

Management Exceptions:

Where a requested stocking is initially refused (on the basis of Table 1) but the proposer believes they have a very strong over-riding management argument on social / economic or public interest grounds this can be appealed to IFI management. In very exceptional circumstances IFI may permit certain stocking which are at variance to the recommendations in **Table 1** these can only be permitted where the proposed stocking does not compromise the status of a water body in terms of the existing legislative environmental imperatives. There are also existing situations that pertain in relation to some existing salmon fisheries – where these have existed for a considerable number of years the continuation of these can be permitted but only following advice from IFI management following consultation with the Standing Scientific Committee for Salmon.

Proposed exception cases must be submitted to:

Inland Fisheries Ireland

Operations Division

Teach Breac

Earl's Island,

Galway

for assessment and should be accompanied by the full rationale for the exception made by the proposer. In cases where this occurs a special stocking advisory committee consisting of the River Basin District Director in whose area the proposal is, along with two other Directors as identified by the Head of Operations. These Directors will convene to assess the case. As part of the assessment the advice of the Research Division of IFI will also be sought. The decision of the appeal committee will issue from the Operations Division of Inland Fisheries Ireland within 5 weeks of the full appeal documentation being received.

This committee is the final arbitrator in these cases.

Inland Fisheries Ireland

August 2015.

Table 1: IFI Fish Translocation Options

Table 1: Advisory for Fish Stocking in Irish Waters, based on Precautionary Principle and Requirements of EU Directives

			Guidance on Proposed Stocking by Waterbody Type				
			Waterbody Type				
		**Stocking History of Water	Natural Waterbodies		Artificial-connected		Artificial-isolated
Fish Species		If Previously Stocked then:	Rivers/streams	Lakes	Canals	Reservoirs	Quarries /Ponds
Native species	Brown Trout	Y*	N	N	N	N	Y*
	Sea trout	N	mgmt	mgmt	N	N	N
	Salmon	mgmt mgmt ++	mgmt mgmt ++	mgmt mgmt ++	N	N	N
	Char	N	N/A	mgmt	N/A	mgmt	mgmt
	Pollan	N	N	mgmt	N	mgmt	N
	Eel	N	mgmt	mgmt	N	mgmt	N
	Shad		mgmt				
	3-spine stickleback						
	10- spine stickleback						
	Brook lamprey						
	River lamprey		mgmt				
	Sea lamprey		mgmt				
Flounder							
Non -native species non benign (influencing ecology)	Roach	N	N	N	mgmt	N	Y
	Perch	N	N	N	mgmt	N	Y
	Pike	mgmt	N	mgmt	mgmt	mgmt	Y
	Bream	N	N	N	mgmt	N	Y
	Carp	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
	Rainbow trout	Y*	N	N	N	N	Y*
Cyprind /Hybrid							
Non-natives species benign (generally not influencing ecology)	Tench	Y	N	N	N	N	Y
	Rudd	Y	N	N	mgmt	mgmt	
	Stoneloach						
	Gudgeon						

Y= yes, Y*= triploid ultimately, diploid permitted to 2016 to permit transition; N= No: **mgmt** = May be permitted under a management/conservation

**Stocking History refers to existing/historical stocking practice, the option of restocking may be possible in limited circumstances subject to IFI management advice and conditions.

Mgmt ++ Where certain existing salmon stocking practices have existed for a considerable period of time these can be permitted subject to special advice Mgmt / SSCS