



Iascach Intíre Éireann  
Inland Fisheries Ireland

Inland Fisheries Ireland  
**Annual Report**  
2015







**Iascach Intíre Éireann**  
**Inland Fisheries Ireland**

**Ireland's Inland Fisheries & Sea Angling Resource**

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# 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 to generate a positive return for the community and the environment.”**

## Principal Functions of Inland Fisheries Ireland

Inland Fisheries Ireland is the statutory body responsible for inland fisheries in Ireland. It operates under the aegis of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR).

The principal function of Inland Fisheries Ireland is set out under Section 7 (2) of the Inland Fisheries Act of 2010. This is the protection management and conservation of the inland fisheries resource. The general functions of IFI are to:

- a)** Promote, support, facilitate and advise the Minister on the conservation, protection, management, marketing, development and improvement of inland fisheries, including sea angling.
- b)** Develop and advise the Minister on policy and national strategies relating to inland fisheries including sea angling, and
- c)** To ensure implementation and delivery of policy and strategies developed under (b) as agreed with the Minister.





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# Chairman's Statement



I am pleased to present the Annual Report 2015 for Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI). The principal functions of IFI are set out in **Section 7 of the Inland Fisheries Act 2010** and they are the conservation, protection, management, marketing, development and improvement of our inland fisheries and sea angling resources. This report provides high level detail of the work undertaken and the services provided by IFI during the period from January 1st to December 31st, 2015.

In accordance with section 13.1 of the 2009 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies

- (i) The commercially significant development which took place was the purchase of the new Logistics and Research Centre at Citywest in March 2015 (replacing the leased laboratory premises in Swords, Co. Dublin).
- (ii) The Board complied with all appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, procurement and disposal of assets;
- (iii) The Board has complied with its obligations under tax law;
- (iv) A statement on the Board's system of internal financial control is also available in this annual report;
- (v) The Codes of Business Conduct for Directors and for Employees have been put in place and adhered to. These Codes are available on the IFI website;
- (vi) The Board has complied with Government policy on the pay of the Chief Executive Officer and all employees;
- (vii) The Board was in compliance with Government guidelines on the payment of Director's fees;
- (viii) As of now, there have been no significant post balance sheet events;
- (ix) The Board has complied with the Guidelines for the Appraisal and Management of Capital Expenditure Proposals;
- (x) The Board has complied with all Government Travel Policy requirements;
- (xi) All Board members have made a Disclosure of Interests in accordance with the 2009 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies;
- (xii) The 2009 Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies has been adopted by the Board and the Board is compliant with the provisions of the Code.

In accordance with Section 13.2 of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2009, I can confirm that no commercially sensitive developments took place in the preceding six months.

All of the services delivered during the period of this report recognised IFI's "value for money" ethos. The pressures on Exchequer funding in recent years have necessitated an even closer focus on expenditure. I wish to commend all IFI staff for the value for money approach they consistently take.



L to R: Emma Fortune (Board Secretary), Martin McEnroe, Dr Frances Lucy, Fintan Gorman (Chair), PJ Nally, Dr Ciaran Byrne (CEO), Niall Greene, Sean Coady (Staff). At December 31st there were three vacancies on the Board.

During the period IFI consulted with staff and stakeholders on its next corporate plan and I will be delighted to launch the IFI Corporate Plan 2016-2020 following its approval by the Minister. This plan sets out the priorities for the organisation over the next five years, providing a schedule of key performance indicators (KPIs) which allow progress to be measured, and defined outcomes to be achieved. The Corporate Plan 2016-2020 takes into account a greatly increased focus on risk and risk management; and towards a more open and transparent public service, a focus on performance and governance.

I am proud to report that IFI's National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD) was launched on November 26th. This strategy seeks to improve fisheries habitat and infrastructure over the next five years. Implementation of the fully funded NSAD will deliver significant increases in the number of domestic and tourist recreational anglers leading to enhanced economic benefits in less developed areas of the country.

Inland Fisheries Ireland recognises that key to the success of any public benefit agency is the ability to communicate clearly with its stakeholders. IFI has commenced the development of its comprehensive communication strategy, enhancing openness, transparency and accessibility with the citizen in mind. During 2015 IFI introduced its Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan 2015-2017, commencing a 24 month cycle of the implementation of improvements in customer service.

However, 2015 was not without its concerns. The fisheries service requires a modern piece of consolidated fisheries legislation which will underpin the development of the sector into the future. Modernised legislation would support the efficient and effective development of IFI and the wider inland fisheries sector. During 2015 IFI, in common with other public bodies, continued to operate in a reduced resource environment and this combined with the age profile of staff members will require action to ensure the service can still deliver on its core goals of protection, management and conservation. The Board notes the decision not to proceed with



the Galway Bay Salmon Farm as originally proposed and welcomes it from the perspective of the imperative to protect dwindling stocks of migratory salmonids in Galway Bay. While IFI is supportive of sustainable aquaculture the Board has consistently expressed its concerns on the continued failure to adequately control sea lice levels on a small number of salmon farms. 2015 was also challenging from an operational perspective. Staff have continued to effect a considerable number of detections and prosecutions of illegal fishing which is having a ravaging effect on already precarious stocks in our valuable fisheries. The operating environment in which we work has also become much more hostile and during 2015 a number of staff members have suffered both verbal and physical abuse in the course of their duties.

I would like to sincerely thank my fellow Board members for their support and express my particular thanks to those members who left during the year; Brendan O'Mahony (Chair), Lal Faherty, Marcus MacMahon (Staff Representative) and John Geary following their five year term of office. Finally I would like to extend my gratitude to the Minister of State for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Joe McHugh TD, and the officials from his Department for their continued strong support.

Fintan Gorman  
Chairman  
April 2016


## Chief Executive Officer's Introduction

I am delighted to introduce the 2015 annual report of the activities of Inland Fisheries Ireland. This report sets out at a high level the main activities undertaken by IFI in 2015. Understandably, it is not possible nor desirable to quantify every single activity undertaken in one report. Thus an effort has been made to extract the most important information and display it in a manner which is most useful to the readers of this report, and in this regard a number of dashboard graphics setting out the key metrics are included. Many of the reports contained herein are also supported by links to IFI's website where more comprehensive and detailed information is available.

I was delighted to welcome Mr Fintan Gorman as the new Chairman to the Board and his presence and guiding hand immediately benefited the organisation where there has been an increased focus on governance and accountability right throughout IFI. Mr Sean Coady was also appointed to the Board as the staff nominee and his deep insights and experience of the inland fisheries sector have also been a valuable asset to the work of the Board of IFI. I would like to thank all of the Board of IFI for their unwavering support during 2015 and their focus on driving the organisation forward to ensure we are operating and delivering for the Irish taxpayer to the best of our abilities.

During 2015 two important strategy documents were prepared and are in the process of being ratified. The National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD) and also IFI's new Corporate Plan. Both of these strategies will drive the performance of the organisation over the coming years.

2015 was, in many ways a challenging, yet successful year for IFI. Again, it was the staff who have worked tirelessly to ensure the organisation's core objectives of conserving, developing, and protecting our inland fisheries and sea angling resource were achieved. Whether the issue was focusing in illegal fishing, of which a significant number of incidents were detected in 2015 or developing fisheries infrastructure, or promoting and supporting international angling competitions the staff of IFI undertook their work with a passion and zeal which is hard to match. For this I am very grateful to one and all.



Dr Ciaran Byrne  
CEO  
Inland Fisheries Ireland





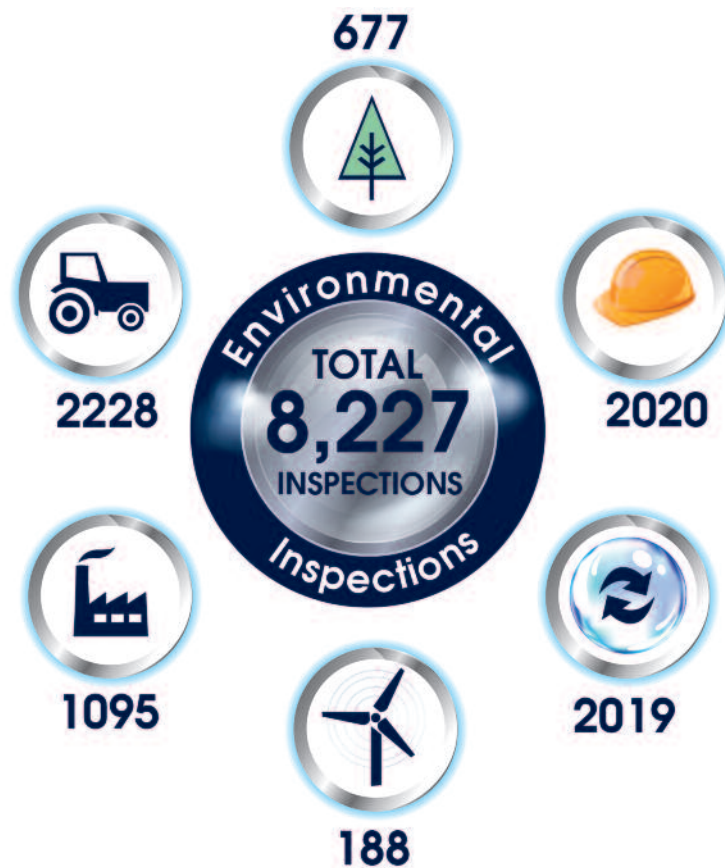
## Managerial Team

Dr Ciaran Byrne	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Pat Doherty	Head of Finance & ICT
Mr Kieran Murphy	Head of Human Resources
Dr Greg Forde	Head of Operations
Dr Cathal Gallagher	Head of Research & Development
Ms Suzanne Campion	Head of Business Development

## River Basin District Directors

Mr Brian Beckett	IFI Dublin	(Eastern River Basin District)
Mr David McNerney	IFI Clonmel	(South Eastern River Basin District)
Vacancy at December 31st	IFI Macroom	(South Western River Basin District)
Ms Amanda Mooney	IFI Limerick	(Shannon River Basin District)
Dr John Conneely	IFI Galway Ballina	(Western River Basin District)
Dr Milton Matthews	IFI Ballyshannon	(North Western River Basin District)

At a Glance...



Conserving, Protecting, Developing, Managing and Promoting



 **1,221**  
Illegal  
Equipment  
Seizures

  
**76**  
Convictions

  
**289**  
Fixed Charge  
Notices  
issued

  
**73**  
Prosecutions  
Initiated

**28,764**  
Fisheries Patrols

  
**561**  
Land Based  
Patrols

  
**1,147**  
Water Based  
Patrols

  
**27,056**  
Foot/Vehicle  
Patrols

**€219,900**  
Spent on  
33 Angling Facility Projects



**Replaced 62**  
  
stiles, footbridges & platforms

**NEW**  
**188**  
fishing  
spaces

\* includes convictions for both protection and environmental offences

\*\* includes prosecutions initiated for both protection and environmental offences (See Appendix I for full breakdown)





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Inland Fisheries Ireland is responsible for ensuring the protection and conservation of Ireland's fisheries resource; the fish and their habitats in both inland waterways and out to a twelve mile limit off the coast. IFI is empowered to protect this natural resource under the provisions of the Fisheries Acts 1959 to 2010 and the Water Pollution Acts 1977 & 1990.

The species protected extends to all freshwater fish including migratory species such as salmon, sea trout, eel and lamprey. IFI is also responsible for protecting sea bass under a service level agreement (SLA) with the Sea Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and certain molluscs including oysters.

The Operations Division consists of a Head of Function and six River Basin District Directors who are regionally based around the country, within this structure there are 253 staff.

## Protection of our Fisheries Resource

In 2015, **over 172,000 man-hours** were dedicated to the safeguarding of Ireland's fisheries resource in an extensive protection programme which comprised routine day patrols, covert day and night patrols and intelligence led surveillance operations on tidal, coastal and inland waters.

IFI utilises a range of patrol methods to carry out water and land based patrols. The principal methods used for water based patrols are boats, kayaks and Personal Water Craft (PWCs). Land based patrols are carried out using quads, bicycles, vehicles and foot patrols. The most frequent patrol method was vehicle/foot patrols with 27,056 patrols being recorded during 2015. Over a thousand kayak and boat patrols were also carried out during this period.

River patrols accounted for 96,057 man-hours and a total of 36,808 man-hours were dedicated to patrolling lakes with the greatest activity required in Q2 with 11,017 man-hours being recorded for this period. Man-hours committed to patrolling coastal, estuary and sea areas totalled 39,330 with the greatest activity during Q3 2015.

The use of new technology has broadened the range of fisheries protection as IFI field staff continue to embrace the use of new equipment including the latest night sights, spotting scopes and mobile CCTV cameras.

IFI staff carried out inspections of licence holders to ensure legislative compliance. During this period 35,192 inspections were carried out on recreational anglers, commercial salmon/ sea trout licence holders and other anglers, an increase of 2,944 inspections on 2014 figures.

## Seizures

An extensive range and number of items for illegal use were seized during 2015 ranging from fishing rods, dinghies, spears, hand lines and nets. In total 1,221 items were seized which included 345 nets measuring 14,539 metres.

## Prosecutions

In 2015, 61 prosecution cases were initiated for breaches of fisheries legislation. In less severe cases offenders were issued with a Fixed Charge Penalty Notice in lieu of prosecution. A total of 289 Fixed Charge Penalty Notices were issued during 2015. Sixty five convictions were recorded for prosecution cases which came before the courts in 2015 for offences largely relating to apprehensions in 2014. The number of apprehensions and the range of offences recorded in 2015 affirmed the need for strict enforcement and continued protection of the fisheries resource. See Appendix I for prosecutions details by River Basin District (RBD).





**Ireland's Inland Fisheries & Sea Angling Resource**



## The Environment and Fish

### Water Quality/Pollution

A wide range of environmental issues were addressed during this period and over 19,000 environmental inspections were carried out. There was an increase in the number of inspections of industrial premises which rose by 62% from 676 in 2014 to 1,095 in 2015. The number of inspections of civil engineering/infrastructure works also increased in 2015 with 2,020 inspections taking place for this metric, an increase of 176 inspections on 2014 figures – this would be indicative of the start in turnaround of the economy and new investment in capital projects. Twelve prosecution cases were initiated for water quality infringements incidents while 11 convictions were secured for environmental cases which came before the courts in 2015.

### Fish Kills

There were 23 reported incidents of fish kills in 2015, seven of which were caused by agricultural practice, two by municipal works and 1 by industrial works. See Appendix II for details of reported fish kills by RBD.

In some instances, the cause of a fish kill may not be determined. Following the exceptional rainfall events late in the year a number of issues arose in relation to agricultural pollution and capacity issues at a number of waste water treatment plants (WWTP).



## Fish Kills 2015



## Fisheries Infrastructure Development

Ireland's Inland Fisheries & Sea Angling Resource

## Securing a Future for Fish

The protection and development of the fisheries habitat remains an integral part of IFI's core remit. This is achieved in a number of ways, either through the direct provision of habitat enhancement projects or, providing expertise and access to funding resources (such as the Salmon Conservation Fund) to third parties for their projects. IFI also adopts a proactive approach in engaging with agencies and other interest groups to ensure that development works are carried out with minimal impact on fisheries habitats.

An example of such collaboration is the development works at Ardara and Glenties Waste Water Treatment Plants (WWTP) in Donegal. IFI has worked closely with the construction company who sought advice in relation to pipe/manhole laying and the removal of the invasive species such as Japanese knotweed. IFI provided recommendations minimising aquatic habitat interference and an ecologist will be employed for the more sensitive elements of this phase of the works. Site inspections and meetings with the construction company will take place as the project develops.

In 2015, there were a number of major infrastructural projects ongoing across the country which had the potential to significantly impact the fisheries resource. These included major wind farm developments such as the Galway Wind Park where 69 turbines will be installed in a sensitive catchment located between Moycullen and Spiddal. Due to the size of this development, IFI is obliged to visit the site regularly to ensure strict compliance with agreed method statements and liaise with the contractor in relation to any fisheries related issues arising.

## Fisheries Habitat Development

Over 52,000 metres of stream and lakeshore were maintained and 23,000 metres of stream/river banks rehabilitated nationwide in 2015.

With the support from local Community Employment Schemes (CES) maintenance works on almost 36km (35,890m) of bank were completed. The works largely referred to the removal of excessive vegetation which reduces light penetration, thereby limiting instream life and the removal of instream blockages which is particularly important during the annual salmonid spawning period (October through January). An example of the type of channel maintenance work completed was the Glenlosh River in the Lough Corrib catchment where tree pruning and replanting with native willow species was carried out along 325m of channel.

The trees were pruned to prevent them becoming top heavy and falling into the river. The off cuts were then placed strategically to support bankside regeneration. A total of 4,000 birch trees were also planted in the Glenlosh Valley to encourage and support riparian zone regeneration under funding secured from the Salmon Conservation Fund (details of this fund are provided in Salmon Management on page 57). The area was also fenced off to prevent livestock accessing the bank and damaging the young saplings.



Pruning and planting of saplings on the Glenlosh River (WRBD)

In advance of the opening of a new Greenway from Castlebar to Turlough along the Castlebar River in April 2015, IFI removed excessive overhanging vegetation and also removed considerable amounts of debris from the channel itself. The new Greenway was officially opened by An Taoiseach, Enda Kenny, TD who then cycled the new route.

Two other significant channel rehabilitation projects include the completion of restoration works on the old stone weirs on the Owengarve River in the Bangor District and the Dunkellin River enhancement at Kiltullagh. These projects were funded from the Salmon Conservation Fund. Work on the restoration of the old stone weirs on the Owengarve River was completed in October. Works had commenced in 2014 on this salmon and sea trout river which flows into Clew Bay. The old concrete weirs have been removed and were replaced by rubble mats with new holding pools created both upstream and downstream of the rubble mats.

Other significant projects included enhancement works which commenced in August on the Dereen River (Clare system) under a joint initiative involving the OPW, IFI, Cáirde Na Chláir, Cáirde Na Coiribe and the Clydagh Foundation. Bank clearance and aquatic weed removal was completed on more than 8.5km of priority spawning channel in the Corrib catchment.

A large rock ramp fish pass at Castletown Weir, County Laois was installed with a view to improving fish passage. This was a very significant project both in terms of planning and construction. It was funded through the Salmon Conservation Fund.

Inland Fisheries Ireland was a project partner and beneficiary of the EU LIFE+ Mulkear Life project which was entitled "Restoration of the Lower Shannon Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for Sea Lamprey, Atlantic Salmon and the European Otter". The objective of the project was to restore, through in-stream river restoration works, degraded habitats along stretches of the Mulkear River and its principal tributaries the Newport, Dead and Bilboa Rivers, all of which are situated within the Mulkear Catchment. The Mulkear Life Project received a coveted Local Authorities Membership Association (LAMA) Community & Council Awards 2015 in association with IPB Insurance under the category 'Most Significant Contribution to Water Quality'. This represented a significant achievement for the project, IFI and all the associated partners; Office of Public Works, Limerick County Council and National Parks and Wildlife Service. A full suite of the outputs from the project are available on the dedicated website [www.mulkearlife.com](http://www.mulkearlife.com) which includes five best practice guides, Afterlife Conservation Plan and Management Plan.





## Angling Infrastructure Development

In order to accurately record and assess the condition of all IFI angling structures nationwide, an inventory of all structures commenced in late 2015. In addition to the condition and location of each and every structure, the data collected will include a photograph and precise coordinates which will be uploaded to a national database and will facilitate planned maintenance of the structures.

In 2015, over €219,900 was invested in 33 angling development projects which resulted in the replacement of 262 stiles, footbridges and platforms and the creation of 188 new fishing spaces. Work on the enhancement of angling access was carried out at a number of locations. Development works statistics are available in Appendix III.

IFI in partnership with the East Mayo Anglers' Association (EMAA) which funded the material costs, and IFI personnel supported by Community Employment Scheme (CES) participants, commenced work on the removal and replacement of structures along the IFI owned section of the River Moy licensed to the EMMA. This resulted in 14 dangerous structures being replaced with new long life and low maintenance steel and recycled plastic structures, some of which were of significant size as illustrated in the photographs below.



Dangerous bridge on the EMMA section of the River Moy (left) and one of the new replacement bridges installed in 2015 (right)

IFI upgraded the fishing facilities at Clare Lake near Claremorris in Co. Mayo, with the installation of four new floating fishing stands, provision of wheelchair access, upgraded paths and signage and the provision of disinfection facilities to clean fishing equipment to prevent the spread of invasive species. Fencing was also erected to improve safety around the water and to encourage wild plants and trees to flourish along the lake margins. The work was completed in conjunction with the local Community Employment Scheme and was funded through the Department of the Environment Amenity Fund. The project was carried out in consultation with the Clare Lake / McMahon Park Development Committee, which represented the local



community. Two of the new floating low maintenance and long life stands installed at Clare Lake where wheelchair access was also provided

A prefabricated bridge was installed at the Invermore fish counter to facilitate access and maintenance of the new crump weir. Due to safety concerns regarding corrosion, the access stairs to the weir pool at the Galway Fishery was also replaced. Both structures were fabricated from galvanised steel.



The new access bridge over the Invermore crump weir (left) and the new stairs installed at the Galway Fishery (right)

Funding was secured to resurface the roadway into Ballyhoe 2 Lake, Drumconrath, Co Meath. The last number of years has seen a lot of damage caused to the roadway and urgent upgrade works was required. Ballyhoe 2 Lake is an excellent coarse fishery and a car park and access to the fishery was funded under previous development programmes, so it is important that access to this fishery is maintained.



Work on the River Suck Development Project was completed at Dunamon, Stoneham's Lough and Blacks Lough, Co. Roscommon in February 2015. The works included the installation of a stile at the entrance to the Black's Lough fishery, the completion of the car park area, disabled anglers access at Stoneham's Lough and the creation of a footbridge on part of the Suck Valley Way adjacent to the new structure. This adds an important access point at the Shannon River Basin District's (ShRBD) flagship coarse angling facility in Dunamon and provides an access point for patrols of the River Suck.

In April 2015, Inland Fisheries Ireland launched the Midlands Fisheries Development Fund, a fund of €40,000 to angling clubs and/or community groups in the midlands permit group area. The following projects were

### Midlands Fisheries Fund 2015

Applicant	Waterbody	Proposed Works	Amount
Lough Owel Trout Preservation	Ballyboy & Irishtown streams	Fish passage improvement & spawning enhancement	€6,260
Lough Derravarragh Angling Association	River Gaine & Tributary	River enhancement & spawning	€9,913
Lough Ennell Trout Preservation Association	Dysart Stream	Spawning enhancement, gravel, fencing & tree pruning.	€11,210
Lough Sheelin Trout Protection Association	Hefcarton Stream	Spawning enhancement, gravel, fencing & tree pruning.	€12,617
			€40,000

completed in 2015:

In conjunction with Galway County Council 18 stands were erected in the Portumna area as part of preparation for the 'Shorelines festival'. The stands continue to enhance the local angling amenity.

A new floating stand was put in place in Pallas Lake by the local club and will be a great benefit to anglers and the fishery for the 2016 season – this was funded under a local government funding scheme.





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## Aquatic Invasive Species Management

IFI carried out limited control operations in relation to riparian invasive weeds in the Lough Arrow catchment (Japanese knotweed) and on the banks of the Maam River (Himalayan Balsam). Himalayan Balsam growing along the river bank at Maam was pulled by hand to prevent the plant going to seed and spreading further downstream into the catchment. Staff continued to deal with Japanese knotweed by spraying heavily infested areas along the shores of Lough Arrow. These operations were confined to locations where the invasive weeds impacted angler access. IFI also liaised with Coillte regarding the control and eradication of *Rhododendron* adjacent to Lough Inagh and *Gunnera* sp. along the banks of the Bunowen River (Co. Galway).

The World Cup Trout Fly Fishing competition is fished every year on Lough Mask out of Cushlough, Ballinrobe. In 2015, IFI maintained a presence providing a biosecurity disinfection station for the duration of the competition.

In conjunction with the Office of Public Works (OPW) and Galway County Council (GCC), IFI completed management measures on the curly leaved water weed (*Lagarosiphon major*) in the upper Lough Corrib, a programme which was funded by all three agencies. The weed was maintained at acceptable levels in the upper basin where anglers and other recreational users continue to have access to all areas of the lake. In total, the weed was removed from 13.3ha (133,020m<sup>2</sup>) of lake area in 2015.



Laying a light excluding bio-degradable jute matting at two harbours in June

During his visit to the west of Ireland in May, Prince Charles was briefed on *Lagarosiphon major* control and management operations on Lough Corrib when he visited Sligo IT. He was particularly interested in the innovative control methods employed, including the use of bio-degradable jute matting.



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## Asian Clam in the River Shannon

A full Appropriate Assessment was completed by the relevant agencies for a trial dredging of an Asian Clam infestation in the hot water stretch of the Shannon at Lanesborough. The trial was carried out by Waterways Ireland, the agency with the appropriate expertise and equipment.



Full set up for trial operation

A follow up survey reported that a significant abundance of clams existed in the un-dredged area and whilst there was a reduction in the density of clams in the treated area, a significant population remained.

Inland Fisheries Ireland, with the funding support from ESB, installed four disinfection stations for the area in key angling and boat locations. A disinfection unit was placed upstream and downstream of the Lanesborough Bridge, one at the boat slip on the Lanesborough access point and one unit placed on the angling section of the Ballyleague river bank. Signage was erected on the use of the units and local representatives, along with IFI staff, managed the units. A further disinfection unit was installed in the hot-water angling section at Shannonbridge and was managed by Inland Fisheries Ireland.

## Facilities

As part of a property restructuring review, two bases were closed during the year located in Birr and Ballinlough. A new field base for the North Wicklow / Dublin portion of IFI Dublin's jurisdiction was purchased and refitted to meet specific operational requirements.

The Fisheries Watchtower in Galway City was officially opened by the President Michael D. Higgins on the 27th of March 2015, following refurbishment and the installation of a new footbridge funded by IFI with an additional contribution from Galway City Council. The tower is now managed by Galway Civic Trust as a museum. The President was met on his arrival by the CEO, Dr Ciarán Byrne and was given a guided tour of the Tower and the museum.



President Michael D. Higgins and his wife Sabina, pictured with the Chairman, members of the Board of IFI, CEO and staff with Delo Collier (Duchas na Gaillimhe) at the opening of the Watchtower

## Staff Award



IFI is proud to report that in November 2015, David McCarthy and Martin Dennehy, Fisheries Officers of the South Western River Basin District (SWRBD) were honoured at the Irish Water Safety Awards in Dublin Castle for their heroic efforts in successfully rescuing an individual in difficulty at Lough Bofinne, Bantry, Co. Cork.



David McCarthy and Martin Dennehy with their Irish Water Safety Awards





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## National Research Survey Programme - Lakes and Rivers

IFI's National Research Survey Programme – Lakes and Rivers (NRSP-L&R) was set up in 2015 as part of a restructuring exercise within the Research and Development (R&D) Division. The main function of this national research survey unit is to provide expertise in terms of sampling methodologies and field support to a number of research programmes being undertaken on rivers and lakes.

### Water Framework Directive (WFD)

In 2007, Inland Fisheries Ireland began a fish monitoring programme to assess the health of Ireland's water bodies. This work is necessary to fulfil the requirements of the EU WFD (which was transposed into Irish law - S.I. No. 722 of 2003). The comprehensive three-year rolling fish monitoring programme developed by IFI encompasses over 300 water bodies, (river, lakes and transitional water bodies (estuaries and lagoons). Information collected in each survey is used to assign an 'ecological status' to each water body, ranging from high status to bad status.

WFD fish surveys conducted during 2015 were part of the third three-year rolling programme (2013 – 2015). The surveys were conducted using a suite of European standard methods. A total of 31 river sites were surveyed between July and September 2015. A total of 13 fish species (sea trout are included as a separate 'variety' of trout) and one type of hybrid (roach x bream) were recorded. Brown trout was the most common fish species recorded, being present in 100% of sites surveyed, followed by salmon (71.0%), European eel (48.4%), minnow (38.7%), stone loach (35.5%), three-spined stickleback (32.3%), lamprey sp. (25.8%), perch (16.1%), gudgeon (12.9%), pike (12.9%), flounder (6.5%), roach 9.7%, roach x bream hybrids (3.2%) and sea trout (3.2%). The on-going recovery of three rivers after fish kills was also assessed as part of the ecological status assessment for the WFD.

Twenty-two lakes were surveyed during 2015, resulting in 15 fish species (sea trout are included as a separate 'variety' of trout) and two types of hybrids being recorded. Eel was the most common fish species recorded, occurring in 81.8% of the lakes surveyed. This was followed by brown trout, perch, pike, roach and rudd which were present in 77.3%, 68.2%, 59.1%, 40.9% and 40.9% of lakes respectively. In general, salmonids were the dominant species in lakes in the north, west and south-west of the country. Sea trout were captured in two lakes; Doo Lough and Dungloe Lake. Arctic char were recorded in four lakes; Doo Lough, Lough Kindrum, Lough Mask and Lough Sessiagh. In addition to the standard fish stock surveys for the WFD, hydroacoustic surveys were successfully completed in the pelagic zone of Doo Lough and Lough Mask as part of a PhD project entitled "Endangered fish species in Irish lakes: The development of novel sampling protocols for ecological and conservation status assessment" funded by the Irish Research Council.

Nine transitional water bodies were surveyed during 2015. These included three water bodies in the WRBD, two in the SWRBD, two in the NWRBD and two in the ERBD. A total of 53 fish species (sea trout are included as a separate 'variety' of trout) were recorded across the nine water bodies, with over 26,000 fish recorded. The highest number of species recorded in any water body was 27, recorded in the Castlemaine/Cromane Estuary, while the lowest number was 16, recorded in the Avoca Estuary. Lesser sand eel, sand goby, sprat and flounder were the most abundant species recorded and numbers of lesser sand eel outnumbered all other species recorded. Some important angling species documented during these surveys included brown trout, European seabass, salmon, sea trout, pollack and conger eel.

## River surveys

In addition to the WFD monitoring, a total of 36 rivers or 164 river sites were surveyed in nine river catchments, under the NRSP programme. The Barrow catchment was selected to compare area-delineated (depletion) electric fishing with time-delineated (10 minute) electric fishing as part of a survey method intercalibration exercise. Reports are being compiled for each project and will be published on the IFI website in 2016.

## Lake surveys

In addition to the annual WFD monitoring, four lakes were selected to compare the sampling methods used on the WFD and Brown Trout programmes (Lough Carra, Lough Owel, Lough Gara and Inniscarra Lough) as part of a survey method intercalibration exercise.

## Brown Trout - Lakes

As part of IFI's National Brown Trout Lake Fisheries Programme the annual fish stock assessment results on Lough Sheelin was carried out in spring 2015. Lough Sheelin is the focus of a long term monitoring programme which commenced in the 1970's and continues to be surveyed annually.

## Brown Trout - Micro-satellite DNA Studies of Irish Brown Trout Stocks

Work on IFI's collaborative brown trout genetics programme with Queens University, Belfast continued in 2015. This programme aims to quantify the genetic origin of all trout stocks. The current programme includes the Dublin Rivers (Liffey, Dodder and Tolka), Moy Catchment and Mid-Shannon System (from Carrick-on-Shannon south to and including the River Suck, Lough Ree and River Inny). These projects commenced in 2014 and are due to be completed in 2017. Additional baseline data was collected throughout the year and laboratory analysis is well under way. Other genetics studies completed to date include the Lough Corrib, Lough Mask, Lough Ennell, Lough Sheelin, Lough Derg, River Boyne and River Suir catchments.





## Stream Enhancement

During 2015, IFIs R&D Division was involved in a number of salmonid stream development programmes for salmonids in which habitat enhancement work was carried out. This enhancement work included a range of measures from the addition of spawning gravels to the creation of pool areas. All works carried out aimed to improve the spawning and nursery potential of these rivers and streams.

Reports for all water bodies surveyed in 2015 are underway and will be published on the WFD fish website ([www.wfdfish.ie](http://www.wfdfish.ie)) in 2016.

## Habitats Directive & Red Data Book Fish Programme

This programme studies the fish species listed in the EU Habitats Directive; lamprey, shad and pollan. Two other fish are also studied; char and smelt, due to their conservation importance. The programme team of four full-time staff, assisted by two temporary staff, completed a large programme of surveys on the various species and compiled this information for an annual report that is available on the IFI website. <http://www.fish-eriesireland.ie/Projects/habitats-directive-and-red-data-book-fish-species.html> The surveys were undertaken in collaboration with IFI field staff in each of the River Basin Districts.

The surveys included:

- Catchment-wide surveys for lamprey in the Boyne and Slaney Catchments
- Surveys of sea lamprey spawning in the River Munster Blackwater and in key 'hot-spot' spawning areas
- Juvenile surveys for smelt and shad in the Barrow Estuary
- Radio tracking studies on adult shad in the Barrow Estuary
- Fish surveys on four lakes for char
- Seasonal surveys on Lough Allen for pollan
- Surveys of barriers to fish passage in the Barrow Catchment

Staff presented their work at scientific conferences on fish radio tracking in Canada and on fish passage management in the Netherlands. Two articles written by the project team were published in scientific journals; one dealing with radio tracking of sea lamprey at barriers to fish passage and one dealing with the impact of river dredging on young life stages of lamprey that live in river bed muds and silts.

## Coarse Fish & Pike Programme

A coarse fish and pike programme was established in 2015. The long-term objective of the programme is to advance our management capacity through a greater understanding of the biology and ecology of Ireland's important angling species and to foster links with the fisheries that they support. The programme drew upon existing data sets (e.g. WFD monitoring lakes and rivers), and is complemented with additional fish stock surveys and sampling programmes at targeted areas. The collection of stock data and species specific biological information will better inform management strategies for these species in the future.

### Point Abundance Sample Electrofishing of Juvenile Coarse Fish

While the juvenile stages represent a critical component in life history and recruitment success of any fish species, stock assessments in Irish coarse fisheries have, to date, largely focussed on adult populations.

In addition to completing surveys of adult stocks at a number of important angling waters in conjunction with the NRSP team, Point Abundance Sample Electrofishing (PASE) was piloted at several of these waters in 2015. PASE targets fish fry and can enable the quantification of habitat variables on a small scale at a very large number of discrete sites. This has provided, for the first time, an insight into the habitat preferences of coarse fish in Irish Waters.





In 2015 the new Data and Statistics group has focused on two integrated objectives:

**Objective 1: Capacity-building in statistical analysis using the R statistical software**

Capacity building is being realised through on-going 'R' training workshops at IFI. ('R' is a programming language and software environment for statistical computing. The 'R' language is widely used among statisticians and data miners for developing statistical software and data analysis.) These workshops have been enthusiastically attended and several staff are actively seeking to move their routine analyses into an R framework. This move will strongly improve efficiency as many processes, e.g. annual fish sampling reports, can be substantially simplified using R. In addition to regular workshops, the Data and Statistics group now provide collaborative support to IFI staff in implementing robust statistical analysis of fisheries and ecological data. A number of peer-review manuscripts have already been prepared by this route and the novel research involved will ensure that IFI programmes are based on best scientific practice.

**Objective 2: Conduct high-level analysis of existing IFI data to support policy development and fisheries management**

The IFI Research group has an extraordinary archive of environmental data with potential to yield important management-focused science. The Data and Statistics group is currently engaged in analysis of data pertaining to several core IFI programmes including salmon and sea trout assessment, marine sport fish and WFD monitoring. This work will inform improved sampling and assessment methodologies and ensure that IFI research activities operate at the highest level. Specific scientific outputs will raise the international profile of IFI staff with positive implications for funding bids and for participation in significant international fisheries management fora. An important component of this work is facilitated by IFI expertise in Geographical Information System (GIS) mapping and data synthesis.



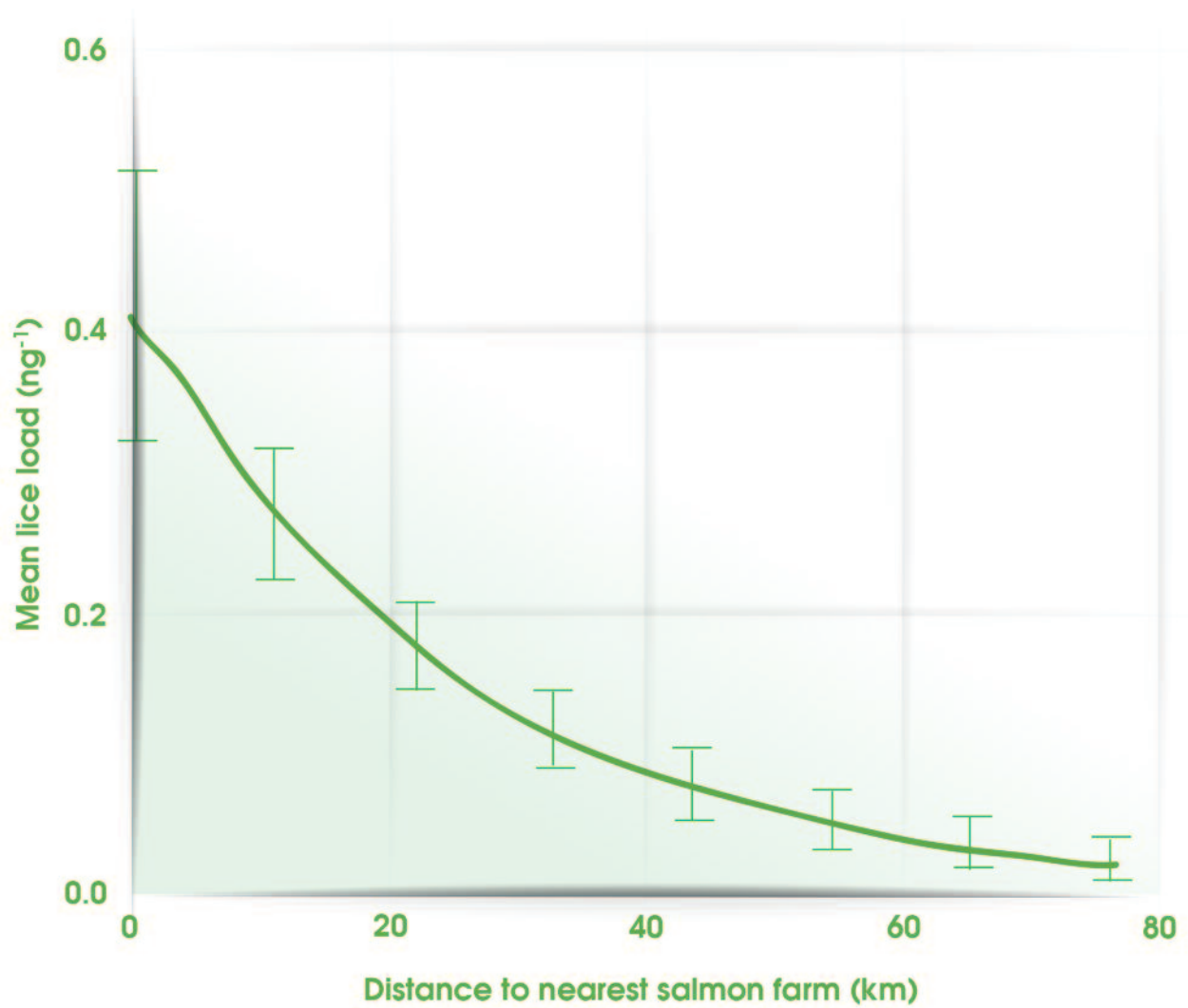
## National Salmonid Index Catchment - River Erriff Catchment

The Erriff River is an index catchment for sea trout populations along the western seaboard of Ireland. It also functions as a national salmon index catchment and its topography, which combines a riverine and a lake fed tributary sub-catchment, is representative of typical migratory salmonid habitat in Ireland.

A long-term sea trout monitoring programme has operated on the Tawnyard Lake sub-catchment of the National Salmonid Index Catchment (NSIC) since 1985. From March through to June 2015 a total of 2,141 sea trout smolts (juveniles) and 681 sea trout kelts (spawned adults) were recorded in the downstream trap situated near the lake outflow; monitoring of returning adult salmon and sea trout was carried out and a total of 1,499 salmon and 584 sea trout ascended through the trap/fish counter located beside Aasleagh Falls during 2015.

The NSIC is critically important in monitoring the Erriff River sea trout population, currently and into the future, and will allow assessment of the impact of environmental factors, including sea lice levels on the sea trout stock. In 2014 investment was made to enhance the research and monitoring capacities on this important index site. As part of this investment an array of hydro acoustic receivers was installed in Killary Harbour to monitor sea trout and salmon movement and residency in the marine environment. This array is central to a 5 year programme to investigate the marine phase of salmonids. In year 1 of this programme (2014) 50 sea trout smolts, 10 kelts & 10 salmon smolts were acoustically tagged & released in the Erriff River in spring 2014. Only salmon smolts were present at the Killary salmon farm in spring 2014. Salmon migrated out of the fjord within 2 days of their release in the lower reaches of the Erriff River. Sea trout (smolts and kelts) displayed differential movement patterns: some migrated fully out of Killary Harbour and others resided fully within the fjord. A proportion of the tagged set were mainly upper Killary residents which made sporadic returns to freshwater. In 2014, 40% of kelts and 25% of smolts returned to freshwater. In 2015 (Year 2 of the programme) 40 sea trout smolts and 11 kelts were acoustically tagged and released. Large grower salmon were present at the Killary Harbour farm in spring 2015. Survival of sea trout back to freshwater, as measured by receivers in the Erriff River trap, was very poor in 2015 and several of the limited numbers of returning fish showed evidence of premature return to freshwater after a short time at sea.

A new sea lice monitoring programme for sea trout began in May 2015 in Killary Harbour with the deployment of a Norwegian bag net. Sea trout are captured alive in the bag net, monitored for sea lice infestation, tagged and returned. Sea trout were recorded with a very high mean abundance of lice (av. 47.3) in May 2015. The bag net will be used to investigate lice infestation levels in spring and the possible influence of lice from the Killary salmon farm on wild salmon and sea trout stocks in Killary Harbour.



The effect of distance to a salmon farm on sea lice infestation of sea trout. Predicted mortality rates for wild sea trout exceed 50% in rivers less than 10km from a salmon farm





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The annual advice on the status of salmon stocks and associated documentation was produced by the Independent Standing Scientific Committee on Salmon (SSCS) and is available for download on the IFI website at <http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/fisheries-management-1/482-the-status-of-irish-salmon-stocks-in-2014-with-precautionary-catch-advice-for-2015>

To support the provision of scientific advice by the SSCS for IFI managers for the 2016 salmon season, Catchment Wide Electro-Fishing (CWEF) was completed in 35 catchments in 2015 to assess abundance and distribution of salmon fry. (These catchments are listed in the report of the Standing Scientific Committee) This index acts as a proxy for adult salmon presence in rivers and in many systems these results provide the only data on salmon spawning in these catchments. A total of 522 sites were visited in 2015. In the first eight years of this programme (2007-2015) a total of 348 catchment surveys in 136 catchments have been undertaken comprising 7,317 individual site surveys. In relation to scientific advice for 2015, based on these CWEF data, fifteen rivers predicted to be under their Conservation Limit (CL) were recommended for opening on a catch & release angling basis. (These 15 rivers have a high average catchment-wide salmon fry index (i.e.  $\geq 17$  fish/5-min over the 2007-2013 period)). A comprehensive series of reports on the IFI salmon management programme are available on the IFI website at <http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Fisheries-management/salmon-management.html>

## National Eel Management Plan

The National Eel Monitoring Programme (NEMP) has completed its second 3 year cycle of monitoring (2012 – 2015), and is about to begin the third cycle (2016). The aim of the programme is to fulfil Ireland's obligations under the monitoring objectives set out in the national eel management plan.

The national elver monitoring programme (part of the Eel Monitoring Programme) was carried out for a sixth year in 2015. The aim of the programme is to monitor the level of elver recruitment arriving in Ireland and create a long-term time series to track changes in recruitment levels. Elver monitoring was undertaken at 6 sites nationally. The distribution of recruitment was spatially uneven this year with some sites recording poor recruitment. The recruitment for Europe has increased in recent years, however it still remains at 12% of historic levels and the endangered status of the stock has not changed. It remains to be seen if this increase in recruitment is as a result of the management measures put in place since 2009 or is just natural variability in the recruitment indices.

In 2015, as part of the yellow eel monitoring programme intensive fyke net surveys were carried out at three lakes (Lough Oughter (Co. Cavan) Lough Ballynahinch (Co. Galway) and Lough Inchiquin (Co. Clare)). These surveys included in-depth research on the swimbladder parasite (*Anguillicola crassus*) prevalence at Lough Ballynahinch and Lough Inchiquin, which had both recorded particularly low infection rates in the previous cycle of surveys. Both lakes now show increased levels of infection suggesting that the last cycle of sampling presented these lakes at an early stage of parasite infection. The River Bride (sub-catchment of Munster Blackwater) was electro-fished for eels to determine the extent of eel distribution in the rivers. This was the first time that a completely riverine sub-catchment has been electro-fished in the programme (no lake in system). Unlike previous electro-fishing catchment surveys which included a lake in the system (lacustrine), the 2015 River Bride survey showed a very uniform distribution of eels around the riverine sub-catchment. Previous surveys on lacustrine catchments had demonstrated higher numbers of eels on the main channel leading up to the main lake in the catchment, and very low distributions of eels in the surrounding tributaries.

Monitoring of the silver eel run on the River Fane system (Co. Monaghan/Co. Armagh) continued for the fifth year. A total catch of 690kg was caught in 23 nights; however 77% of the run came in November coinciding with a large flood event. High flooding continued in December, however the run was completed by the middle of the month. The silver eel fishery on the River Barrow is now in its second year. Nets were set on the Ballyteiglea lock gates of the canal. A total catch of 109kg was caught over 20 nights. It is hoped to continue to monitor the silver eel escapement in the River Barrow catchment as it is the only silver eel index site with a river dominated habitat. In both years of sampling, the length frequency of eels coming from the River Barrow was interesting due to the quantity of small eels in the catch which was not expected, 60-65% of the eels taken back to the laboratory were male eels in 2014 and 2015 respectively. However, a stocking programme carried out by the Fisheries Research Centre in 1990 and 1991 where eels from the River Feale were stocked into the River Barrow could be influencing the stock structure.

Full information on the eel monitoring programme and the EU report are available on the IFI website at <http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Fisheries-Management/eel-management-plan.html>

## Bass Conservation Programme



Bass is the only marine fish species managed for angling and IFI has been working on bass since the 1970s. In 2015, IFI's National Bass Programme delivered several work packages to consolidate scientific data for bass conservation management. Juvenile bass surveys of large estuaries were enhanced to include additional sites. Recorded average 0-group densities in 2015 were depressed in comparison to the 2014 densities but similar to values recorded in 2013. A detailed inshore trawling survey in Waterford Estuary recorded close to 500 bass spanning 1-14 years of age. This was an improvement on the 2014 survey which encountered low numbers of 1 and 2 year old bass only. Scale sampling returns by anglers continued in 2015 and over 1,600 sets of scales have been collected and aged since 2013. The 2007 year class continued to dominate catches. Some anglers are also providing catch data through a voluntary logbook scheme. Long-term datasets (angler catch, competition results etc.) are being collated to determine stock trends; stock levels remain very low compared to the 1980s. Good quality data are required over a long time series to be able to provide a good appraisal of stock status and IFI is working with anglers towards this goal. The contribution of citizen science to this aspect of the bass programme is important to its success and feedback is provided regularly to those who contribute.

A novel satellite tagging project was initiated by IFI in Cork Harbour in 2014 with its partners the Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA) [www.nina.no/english/Home](http://www.nina.no/english/Home) and Wildlife Computers [www.wildlifecomputers.com](http://www.wildlifecomputers.com). The project centred on an investigation into pre-spawning migrations of adult bass and recommenced in September 2015. Large tag size precludes deployment of conventional satellite tags on smaller fish species but this new miniature tag design facilitated tagging of sixteen adult bass ( $\geq 50$  cm length). It was possible to retrieve data from all of the fish tagged with satellite tags in 2014. This data provided valuable information on local movements of bass. Part of the study related to testing of tag performance and the high reporting level was a notable result. The tags on those fish tagged in 2015 are scheduled to pop up in April and May 2016. Analysis of a detailed dataset from the fish tagged in 2014 using this new technology is ongoing.

The study of the microchemistry of bass fry otoliths continued, in order to identify key juvenile bass nurseries using Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICPMS). Based on determination of certain elements in bass otoliths, this study has demonstrated good levels of discrimination between estuaries and a baseline dataset has been developed and a paper prepared for publication. Advancing this baseline to allow for adult bass otolith assignment is a medium term aim of this programme.



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## Marine Sports Fish Estuarine Sampling



In addition to a bass-centric sampling programme a more broadly based sampling programme was also undertaken. This programme was designed to determine fish species presence and distribution in Irish estuaries. While servicing IFI's national role in marine sports fish conservation and the requirements of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) monitoring, this programme resulted in surveys being conducted in ten transitional (estuarine) waters. Species richness ranged from 16 species in the Avoca Estuary (Co. Wicklow), which has high degree of physical modification and is particularly polluted, to 28 species in Castlemaine Harbour (Co. Kerry), which contains a range of habitat types over a large area. The fish populations of Camus Bay and Kinvara Bay (Co. Galway) remained relatively stable since they were last surveyed in 2009. Both are comparatively deep water bodies with generally rocky substrates and only minor fluvial influences may account for this stability. In contrast, the Gweebarra and Erne Estuaries showed major increases in species richness since they were last sampled in 2012. Numbers increased from 14 to 20 for the Gweebarra and 10 to 22 for the Erne. The reasons for this are currently unclear. No unexpected species were encountered throughout the survey programme.

These data will be useful for IFI sportfish management studies in the future. For example, good numbers of juvenile common sole were captured in Tralee Bay; this species was not recorded elsewhere in 2015 and their presence may indicate that Tralee Bay is an important nursery for this valuable angling species. These fish data will contribute to development of a site specific Ecological Quality Ratio for each area sampled for the WFD.





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Since 1970 IFI has operated an elasmobranch tag and recapture programme which is operated mainly by angling charter boat skippers on a voluntary basis. (Elasmobranch is the term for a group of fish that comprises sharks, rays, and skates). Over the course of the programme more than 44,000 fish have been tagged spanning 15 different species. In 2015 data refining of IFI's extensive national tagging database continued.

Blue shark dominates the list of tagged species and, to date, almost 20,000 blue shark have been tagged off the Irish coast, primarily the south and west coasts. Almost 900 recaptures have been recorded from locations including the east coast of Canada and the USA, north east coast of South America, northwest coast of Africa and the mid-Atlantic. These data have been used to support blue shark conservation management by the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) and Tope management by International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) in 2015. Further papers relating to the more vulnerable species were drafted in 2015 and the data are also being used to support the ongoing International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) assessment of Chondrichthyan species (a species of fish whose skeletons are made of cartilage rather than bone) initiated in 2015. This long-term dataset is an important contribution to understanding and protecting these valuable marine ecosystem species.

## IFI Fish Farms

Trout valued at €380,000 were supplied to fisheries in 25 counties; these fish supported angling across a diverse range of fisheries. In 2015, although a continued focus on costs and a value for money ethos was applied, the income generated by IFI fish farms did not cover the cost of providing the service. The loss accrued during 2015 on IFI fish farming operations was €563,092. This brings the cumulative loss from the period 2010 to 2015 to €3,453,233.

Trout numbers provided from IFI Fish Farms

Roscrea

Brown Trout	57,000
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Rainbow Trout	61,000
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Cullion (Mullingar)

Brown Trout	3,500
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Rainbow Trout	13,000
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## Business Development & Stakeholder Empowerment

The Business Development Division of IFI had a very productive year in 2015. The Division produced the National Strategy for Angling Development. The strategy is supported by a comprehensive suite of socio-economic and angling evaluation reports which are available to support IFI and its stakeholders in the development of the angling and inland fisheries resources into the future.

The Division also continued to deliver on the promotional remit of IFI. Significant numbers of stakeholders have been reached through IFI's various marketing and promotion, education and outreach and stakeholder support programmes.

A brief outline of the various programmes and outputs can be found below

### The National Strategy for Angling Development

The National Strategy for Angling Development (NSAD) was formulated by IFI following an extensive research and a public consultation process. It is the first comprehensive national framework for the development of our angling resource. Subject to resource availability the strategy will deliver a wide-ranging set of investments, innovations and promotions. This will lead to the protection and enhancement of fish stocks and angling infrastructure for both their economic value and their recreational benefit to the communities and visitors they serve across Ireland. Effective and sustainable implementation of the strategy will ensure stability of existing jobs and businesses reliant on angling and the creation of new jobs as the economic impact of angling grows.

The strategy will also ensure that our angling resource is protected and conserved in an environmentally sustainable manner for future generations to enjoy. Fundamentally, this strategy strives to make angling an accessible and attractive pursuit for all. In this regard, the strategy is the foremost statement of intent for the future of our angling resource since the establishment of IFI in 2010. The strategy was launched for a further statutory consultation process in November in accordance with Article 13(1)(b) of the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435), as amended by the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) (Amendment) Regulations 2011. IFI will publish its determination and the final document in early 2016.

### Research Programme on the Socio-Economics of Inland Fisheries

In 2015, IFI embarked on a new era of fisheries research; the traditional science based fisheries research would be supplemented by a programme of socio-economic research focussing on recreational fisheries in Ireland. The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) were identified as key partners and a three year joint programme was drawn up entitled '*Research Programme on the Socio-Economics of Inland Fisheries*'. The Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit of NUI Galway were also recruited as key contributors to the programme and the research outputs will support policy decisions regarding the management of the inland fisheries resource and angling within Ireland. The following research papers were written under the partnership in 2015: '*Water Quality and Recreational Angling Demand in Ireland*'; '*Profile of Recreational Anglers in Ireland Based on a National Survey of Sport and Physical Exercise*'; '*Economic Evaluation of Recreational Angling in Ireland*'; '*Valuing the*



*Waterville Fishery: A travel cost analysis of anglers' recreational use-values' and 'Modelling trip frequency of Irish recreational fishers in the presence of excess zeroes and missing data'.*

A number of workshops and seminars were also attended by staff of IFI as part of the socio-economic programme and these included the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea (ICES) Working Group on Recreational Fishing Surveys, European Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture Advisory Commission (EIFAAC) International Symposium on Recreational Fisheries and Environ 2015.

As part of IFI's socio-economic research programme, an omnibus survey of 4,044 Irish households was carried out in the spring of 2015 to estimate current angling participation levels in Ireland. Based on a population size of 3.6 million (aged 15+), results indicated that approximately 273,600 individuals (or 7.6% of respondents) considered themselves to be 'anglers'; an increase of 21,000 on previous participation estimates.

As a part of the National Strategy for Angling Development, it was necessary to re-evaluate recreational angling in Ireland in order to reinforce the importance of Irish angling from a social and economic perspective. Results of the MRBI omnibus survey along with increased tourism figures for 2014 facilitated the reinterpretation of the data acquired during the IFI commissioned Socio-Economic Study of Recreational Angling in Ireland (2013). Based on these updated figures, the current economic contribution of angling in Ireland is estimated to be in the region of €830m and angling supports over 11,300 Irish jobs.



### Websites

IFI's website [www.fishinginireland.info](http://www.fishinginireland.info) plays an important role in connecting domestic and tourist anglers with service providers in the angling sector and in 2015 over 96,375 referrals were made to service providers from IFI websites. In total, there were 4,489,644 pages of content viewed by 631,595 stakeholders. The Fishing in Ireland website is Ireland's the most popular angling website.

### Social Media

The use of social media to engage stakeholders is of great value to IFI. Angling reports are posted to the blog at [www.fishinginireland.info](http://www.fishinginireland.info) and tweeted to our followers on Twitter. With over 7,000 Facebook 'likes' in 2015 (up 26%) IFI's posts on angling in Ireland and other announcements had the potential to be seen by as many 30,000 people in a single day.

### IFI Telephone Hotline **1890 34 74 24**

IFI operates a 24 Hour Hotline on 1890 34 74 24 through which concerned individuals can report incidents of pollution, poaching and the presence of invasive species. During 2015, 239 calls were received through the hotline (down 54% on 2014). The most common reason to call the hotline number was to report an illegal fishing incident (152 calls). 81 calls related to pollution incidents, 1 call reported the presence of invasive species and 5 were general queries (down 97% on 2014).

### Fisheries Awareness Week

The aims of Fisheries Awareness Week (FAW) is to encourage adults and children who may never have fished before to take up angling as a hobby, to work with angling clubs and organisations to promote all types of angling and to increase awareness of the role that IFI has in protecting and conserving our fisheries resource.

During 2015, IFI staff organised and contributed to 26 FAW events across the country and catered for over 1,200 participants. A wide variety of events took place across the country with each attracting attention from local media. The events included: an introduction to deep sea angling at Kilmore Quay, County Wexford; school tours of Cong Hatchery, County Mayo; 'Bio Diversity Day' at Mountmellick, County Laois; an introduction to the marine and riverine environment in Waterville, County Kerry and the annual All-Ireland Trout Angling Competition for anglers with special needs at Loch an Dochais, County Offaly. IFI staff worked well with angling club representatives, fishery owners, charter skippers, volunteers, local businesses, children and their parents. The project will be reviewed in 2016 to investigate whether there are alternate effective ways to promote angling.





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## Something Fishy

The Something Fishy programme is an education resource produced by IFI in conjunction with Blackrock Education Centre. The project is aimed at fifth and sixth classes in Irish primary schools. It explores different aspects of fish life including the underwater environment, Irish fish species, the life cycle of a salmon, conservation of our river catchments, recreational angling and fish as part of the food chain. This project is an invitation to 'virtually' leave the classroom in pursuit of learning, excitement, enjoyment and fun. The lessons transport the child's mind to the waters of Ireland to discover the History, Geography and Science elements of the curriculum.

Since 2008, almost 30,000 children in 1,000 schools have participated in the programme. Over the course of the 2014/15 academic year, 126 schools took part ensuring that the important messages relating to fish conservation and protection reached 3,780 children. St Mary's Senior School, Dunmanway, with their winning entry, 'The Wonderful Water Kids Show' won Best Project for West Cork 2014-2015 and went on to take the national title at a memorable awards ceremony held at West Cork Education Centre in October.

### Dublin Angling Initiative

Set up in 1995, the Dublin Angling Initiative's principal aims are to promote, develop and improve angling in the Dublin and Greater Dublin area. During the year angling tuition courses were provided to 188 young people ranging in age from 11-15 years. Both girls and boys participated in game, coarse and sea fishing. Participants learned to cast, tie knots, bait hooks, catch and release fish safely. Participating groups came from Whitechurch, Mulhuddart Community Youth Project, Blanchardstown Youth Project, Jobstown Action for Youth, Dochas Group in Clondalkin, and Darndale and Tallaght Youth groups.

## Promotional Material

IFI regularly produces angling brochures in a number of different languages to highlight and promote the quality fishing available throughout Ireland. During 2015, IFI produced four new angling brochures. Two of these focused on County Donegal, providing angling information and detailed maps of the River Eany and Gweebarra River, two of the primary salmon fisheries in the county. A brochure focusing on the Annalee River in County Cavan was developed with the assistance of local angling club members and provides information on one of Ireland's lesser known trout angling streams. An updated English version and a German version of the County Mayo Game Angling guide were completed. These brochures can be downloaded from <http://fishinginireland.info/useful.htm>. IFI also took a lead role in developing and producing material for the Angling Ireland brand. This is a joint marketing initiative to promote angling on the island of Ireland which is run in partnership with the Loughs Agency and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) in Northern Ireland.



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## IFI Sponsorship Scheme

Through the Sponsorship Scheme in 2015, IFI awarded just over €60,000 to angling clubs, angling federations, community groups and tourism service providers to support angling, angling competitions, novice angler initiatives and national angling teams. Further support was awarded in the form of staff support, biosecurity assistance, the provision of equipment and preparation of venues at a cost of approximately €100,000 to IFI. Almost 100 events were supported in 2015.

IFI's socio-economic research programme has shown that such sponsorship promotes economic activity and supports jobs where angling events take place. A partnership research project between IFI, the Irish Research Council and NUI Galway also demonstrated that anglers who participate in angling competitions are likely to spend more money than pleasure anglers.

## Journalist Visits

Nine media visits were organised by IFI during 2015 and a number of others were assisted by IFI staff. These trips were run in association with our tourism partners and with the assistance of a number of angling service providers from around the country. Journalists from our key angling tourism markets of the UK, France, the Netherlands & Germany visited a range of angling destinations and covered all angling disciplines. These media visits will yield a number of feature articles in the angling press and will help ensure that Ireland remains a prime angling holiday destination.

Over 25 articles were published in the printed angling press during 2015 as a result of media visits organised by IFI in recent years. The estimated value of these articles, in terms of advertising equivalency, was in excess of €210,000. Many more web articles, video clips and social media postings have also been published ensuring coverage for Ireland across a range of media platforms.

## Angling Promotion – Trade Shows

IFI attended a total of 16 trade shows in Ireland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy and the UK. These trade shows were selected for their proven track record in providing effective access to both customers and media alike with each trade show providing a slightly different mix in terms of angling disciplines and target markets. In order to ensure that IFI's offering was to a professional standard, only staff with sufficient angling expertise and language skills were chosen to attend these events.

In some instances, trade partners were invited to participate on the IFI stand to provide better and more effective marketing opportunities. Overall, feedback from staff and members of the trade attending the shows was very positive.

Seven shows were attended under the new Angling Ireland brand and organised in conjunction with our partners from DCAL and the Loughs Agency. To further the cooperation between the three agencies a joint



calendar of events has been agreed for the 2016 shows season including a total of 10 joint trade fairs.

## State Fisheries

IFI has approximately 171 State fisheries under management. A standard and transparent process is in place for the tendering and licencing of these State fisheries. IFI has a policy of ensuring that all of its State assets are openly available to the public and as such we insist that any angling club that is awarded a licence for a State fishery makes available day/weekly/season tickets to any visiting angler; this ensures that all these fisheries can easily be enjoyed by locals and tourists alike. During the 2015 season, 82 fisheries were under licence to 46 clubs and organisations generating over €56,540 income in licence fees.

## Funding

IFI operated two contributor funding schemes in 2015. The larger of the two is the Salmon Conservation Fund which is outlined in detail opposite. The second is the Midland Fisheries Fund, which allocated €40,000 to 4 clubs for separate projects in the Shannon Permit Area. Loughs Derravarragh, Sheelin, Ennell and Owel benefitted from this allocation.

IFI also applied rural recreation funding to 5 projects. Under these programmes a total of €126,000 was awarded in counties Tipperary, Mayo, Leitrim, Roscommon and Offaly. Works undertaken were carried out under the supervision of IFI staff.

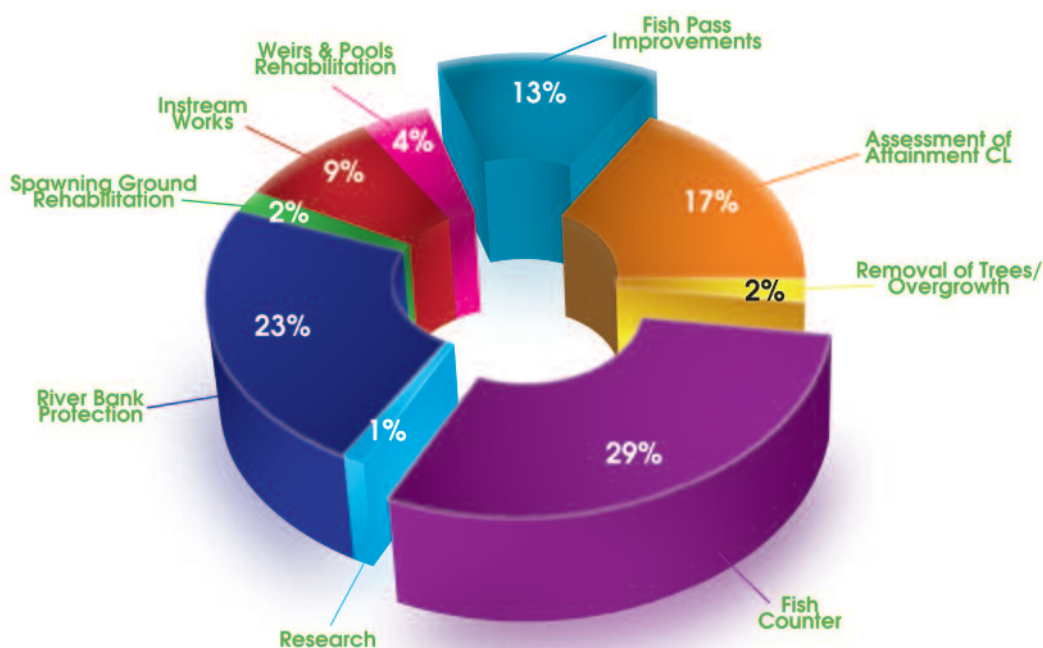


## Salmon Conservation Fund

During 2015, funds were allocated for 26 fisheries infrastructure and development projects totalling in excess of €718,208. These awards were from Salmon Conservation Funds collected in 2014 and funds carried forward from previous years. Those who have purchased a salmon rod or commercial fishing licence in the relevant year can apply for funding and these may include angling clubs, commercial fishermen, fishery owners, riparian owners and landowners with an interest in a salmon fishery. It is divided between projects undertaken by IFI and projects undertaken by interested groups who have contributed to the fund. In 2015, €200,000 was made available to clubs, fishery owners, commercial salmon fisheries and other organisations. 14 contributor projects were awarded €168,214 and 12 IFI projects were allocated €550,066 towards infrastructure and development projects. See Appendix IV for licence revenue and Appendix V which lists the projects completed by IFI and contributor groups in 2015 using funds collected in 2014.

Full details in relation to the salmon conservation fund can be accessed on the IFI website at the following link; <http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Salmon-Management/salmon-conservation-fund.html>

Types of Works Carried out in 2015 using 2014 Funds



## Locations of Salmon Conservation Fund projects funded in 2015 from 2014 funds



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The types of projects considered are as follows: River Bank protection (rock armour, log revetment etc.); Spawning enhancement (addition/raking of gravel or cleaning of existing substrates); Instream structures (weirs, deflectors, rubble mats, random boulders etc.); Fish passage improvement (e.g. removal of barriers, modification of weirs, and construction of fish passes etc.); Fencing (protection of river banks including fences, stiles, cattle drinks etc.); Riparian zone improvement (tree pruning and strategic tree planting); Removal & control of exotic invasive species (e.g. Rhododendron, Japanese knotweed, Asian Clam, Chub etc.) and, lastly, Feasibility studies which lead to future projects under the above headings.

Locations of Salmon Conservation Fund projects funded in 2015 from 2014 funds – see *Appendix V for more details*.

## Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme

In 2015, based on scientific advice, management recommended the opening or partially opening of 86 rivers (including catch and release options) and the closure or partial closure of salmon and sea trout fishing in 62 rivers. A system of brown gill tags was in operation in select rivers where it was considered necessary to ensure that river based salmon angling quotas were not exceeded.

The principal aims of the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme are to provide a means of collecting accurate nominal catch statistics and estimates of salmon and sea trout stock exploitation, to develop best management strategies and to ensure these species are exploited in a sustainable manner on a national, river basin, fishery district and river basis.

Under the regulations all fishermen must affix a coded tag to each salmon (or sea trout over 40 cm) that they catch and retain. A logbook entry must then be made giving details of each fish caught. All logbooks and unused tags must be returned to RBD offices as set out in the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme regulations.

This data is entered into a national database by IFI staff and following this, the validation, collation and analysis of the data is performed to produce the annual Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Statistics Report. These reports provide valuable information to fisheries managers, scientists, policy makers and legislators and assist in the design and implementation of policies and strategies for the conservation of salmon and sea trout stocks in Ireland. The most recent reports (2001 to 2014) can be downloaded from the IFI website at <http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/Salmon-Management/wild-salmon-and-sea-trout-statistics.html>

## Bye-laws

The principal Bye-laws introduced for the 2015 season were for the Conservation of Salmon and Sea Trout stocks. Bye-laws were set in place at both national and local level to facilitate bag limits for salmon and sea trout angling (Bye-laws No. 928 and 931 of 2014, the opening of fisheries on a catch and release basis (Bye-laws No. 929 and 932 of 2014), and the closure of certain fisheries where it was considered necessary to afford adequate protection to salmon and sea trout stocks (Bye-law No. 318 of 2014).

Further restrictions were set in place for all angling methods on certain closed and catch and release fisheries prohibiting the use of any fish hooks, other than single barbless hooks, and the use of worms as bait in angling where it was considered necessary to afford additional protection measures to salmon and sea trout stocks (Angling Bye-law No. 930, 2014).

Commercial fishing for salmon and sea trout detailing the rivers where commercial fishing was permitted along with the opening and closing season was set out in the various Bye-laws (Bye-law No. 933 of 2015).

The above Bye-laws were proposed by IFI, based on best management and scientific advice and consultation with stakeholders, and then submitted to the Minister for Communications, Energy & Natural Resources for consideration. Following approval and signing by the Minister, these Bye-laws are enforced by IFI field staff. A list of relevant Bye-laws enacted for 2015 are provided and can be found on the IFI website: <http://www.fisheriesireland.ie/publications/fisheries-legislation-and-regulations.html>





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## HR Operations

### Staffing

The approved staffing levels for IFI are set by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER). The level set for 2015 was 312 whole time equivalent\* (WTE) staff. IFI engages a number of temporary staff to assist in seasonal protection duties at peak times on an annual basis.

During 2015 the overall staffing level reduced from 299.6 (WTE) at January 1st to 291.7 (WTE) at December 31st 2015, a net decrease of 7.9 (WTE). 21.4 (WTE) staff left the organisation through natural turnover, retirements and the finalisation of a limited Targeted Voluntary Redundancy Scheme. IFI engaged in a recruitment campaign and 13.5 (WTE) appointments were made. In addition a total of 36 (18 WTE) staff were engaged to assist in seasonal protection duties. IFI will continue its recruitment campaign in 2016.

### Employee Relations

IFI values the maintenance of excellent employee relations with its staff and with the trade unions that represent and negotiate on their behalf. Nurturing these relationships is paramount in achieving harmonious employee relations.

Late in the year a staff survey was launched with the primary objective of obtaining views on the work of IFI, its workplace and leadership in the organisation. The survey results will highlight where IFI is doing well and identify areas for improvement. An output of the survey is that IFI will develop informed action plans to address issues identified. It was an important opportunity for staff to express their opinion on a wide variety of issues. In providing their input, staff are helping IFI maintain a respectful and productive work environment, and in turn, provide better services to stakeholders. There was a 65% return and the results will provide guidance in addressing areas identified.

As in previous years the 2015 staff Corporate Day took place in November, which is traditionally a quieter time due to the nature of the fisheries seasons and the environment. This date is designed to communicate important organisational/regulatory/governance updates such as the Business Plan, Health & Safety and staff welfare matters. It is also an opportunity to share the projects completed by staff during the year which achieved excellence in practice.

*\*Whole time equivalent (WTE) is a term used to describe staff numbers in units which allow part time and full time staff to be added together. For example: 3.6 WTE might be made up of 3 full time staff and one part time staff member working a three day week.*

## Training & Development

IFI strives to provide the most effective targeted training and development opportunities to staff which relates to operational requirements and personal development. Training and development requirements are identified through a number of primary sources; Health and Safety and Operation requirements and Personal Development, the latter being identified through the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).

### Training Undertaken 2015

Training Course	No of Participants	Training (Days)	Total Staff Training (Days)
Basic Boat Training	45	9	405
Advance Boat Training	21	17	357
4X4 Professional off Road Driving (Advanced)	26	1	26
4X4 Driving (Basic)	88	2	176
Cardiac First Responder Instructor	2	2	4
Chainsaw Basic	1	5	5
CPC- Control of Vehicle and ECO Driving Techniques	2	1	2
Critical Incident Stress Management	1	1	1
Electric Fishing	2	3	6
Emergency First Response	11	4	44
Environmental Workshop	30	1	30
Farmed Fish - Welfare	1	1	1
Freedom of Information Decision Maker	33	1	33
Gas & Cylinder Safety	1	1	1
Health & Safety Induction	30	1	30
Human Resources Induction	14	1	14
Managing Performance	70	2	140
Manual Handling	183	1	183
Occupational First Aid	64	2 or 3	160
Pesticide Handling	8	4	32
River Safety & Rescue Level 1	67	3	201
River Safety & Rescue Level 2	56	4	224
Fishery Officer Procedures - Legislation and Role	34	1	34
Safe Pass	19	1	19
QUAD Experienced Operator	3	1	3
Swift water & Flood First Responder	15	2	30
Water & Flood Awareness	1	1	1
	<b>828</b>		<b>2,162</b>





27 training programmes were delivered for staff of IFI in 2015, over 2,162 training days, averaging 7.4 days per employee. The training cost for 2015 amounted to 2.0% of payroll. As in previous years the quality of the training provided has allowed IFI staff to work more safely, more efficiently and more effectively towards achieving the goals of the organisation and in providing a more professional and customer centric service for our stakeholders.

## **Health & Safety**

Health & Safety management contributes to all aspects of business performance as part of a demonstrable commitment to continuous improvement. IFI is committed to implementing the fundamentals of good health and safety practice. This commitment is recognised in the cost effective approaches to preserving and developing physical and human resources which mitigate financial loss and liabilities.

Of key importance in achieving this objective is ensuring that safety policies, practices and procedures particularly in regard to operational matters are reviewed to ensure they not only comply with requirements, but are at the vanguard of best safety practice. In this regard a comprehensive review of the safety statement was undertaken and relevant updates included. The statement was made available to all staff.

Other examples include (i) the formation of newly elected national safety committee which is charged with making representations to management on behalf of staff on matters of safety, health & welfare; (ii) continued implementation of health & safety induction; (iii) the roll out of a radon survey in respect of IFI buildings (iv) the commencement of the IFI workplace biannual risk assessment cycle 2015/16. Other noteworthy improvements include the extension of the fire safety management programme to incorporate emergency light test and maintenance schedules. Significant investment and operational changes have dramatically reduced the risk relating to manual handling practices at the Roscrea Fish Farm.

## **Incident Reporting Statistics 2015**

24 incidents resulting in injury were reported to the Health & Safety Executive in 2015. Of these 11 were reported to the Health & Safety Authority. There has been an increase in reporting of minor incidents during the period by staff. This is a positive change as the rate of reporting is an indicator of organisational safety culture. Incident reporting is perceived as having a positive effect on safety, not only by leading to changes in operational processes but also by changing staff attitudes and knowledge.

## Regulatory Compliance

### Freedom of Information (FOI)

The Model Publication Scheme initiative progressed during 2015 as part of the delivery of the Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016, building on one of its key priorities of improving greater openness, transparency and accountability in the public sector. On October 14th the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER), Mr. Brendan Howlin T.D., announced the publication of the Model Publication Scheme under Section 8 of the Freedom of Information (FOI) Act 2014. This requires that all Departments and public bodies falling under the remit of the Act to provide prescribed information regarding the organisation. The scope of information extends to; services provided to the public, decision making processes, financial information, procurement and its FOI disclosure log. Each organisation must formalise the publication scheme on its website by April 14th 2016. Preparation for IFI's scheme launch date is on schedule.

There were 2 FOI requests open at the end of 2014 and responded to early in 2015. 19 FOI requests were received during the year; 4 were granted, 7 part-granted, 5 refused and 5 remained open at December 31st and will be responded to within the statutory timeframe in 2016.

## Customer Service

### Customer Charter and Customer Action Plan 2015-2017

During the year IFI completed its latest Customer Charter and in line with the 'Guidance for the preparation of Customer Charters & Customer Action Plans' (DPER 2012) completed its Customer Action Plan 2015-2017. Incorporating the 12 Principles of Quality Customer Service, 28 key customer service action points have been developed for delivery over the next 24 months. Key aspects of the Customer Action Plan will be a stakeholder satisfaction survey, customer service training for staff and development of a public consultation policy.

#### Chief Executive Officer Remuneration

The remuneration of the Chief Executive Officer of Inland Fisheries Ireland is in accordance with the Assistant Secretary scale which ranges from: minimum €119,381 to maximum €136,276.

*Note: the scale quoted reflects reductions required under the terms of the Haddington Road Agreement.*



The role of the Finance and Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Division of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) is to deliver an effective financial management service to IFI through provision of a comprehensive set of Financial and ICT systems which are adaptive and flexible enough to meet the evolving demands of IFI and robust enough to meet the highest standards of corporate governance.

The Division is pleased to report on the successful delivery against the goals defined in the agency's 2015 Business Plans. In addition to providing the necessary financial management, co-ordination, and specialist support services to all Divisions and maintaining proper financial records for the agency during 2015, the Division complied with statutory and corporate governance reporting deadlines for both the Financial Statements and the Annual Report.

The Division also provided financial advice for strategic decision making to the management and Board of IFI, including Board financial accounts and analysis.

The Division was instrumental in managing the financial and legal aspects relating to the purchase of the new Logistics and Research Centre and the new IFI base at Kilcoole.

## Financial Management

### Budgets and Management accounts

During 2015 detailed Divisional budgets were prepared and consolidated into a final IFI budget that was agreed by the Board and the Senior Management Team (SMT). Management accounts were presented to the Board and SMT on a monthly basis with a commentary on performance against budget.

### Financial Statements

IFI's Financial Accounts in respect of 2015 were submitted to the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR) for the 29th of February 2015 deadline and to the Minister and the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) by the 31st of March 2015 in full compliance with statutory obligations.

### Procurement

IFI spent €3.8 million on the purchase of assets in 2015. €2.2 million was spent on three premises; €1.75 million on the Logistical and Research facility in Citywest, €217k for the new base in Kilcoole and a further €217k on the base in Tralee. A significant investment of €1.25 million was used to upgrade the IFI vehicle fleet. Strict procurement procedures were applied and in a significant number of cases assets were purchased either through Government frameworks set up by the National Procurement Service or the eTenders portal. Assets not purchased through these processes were generally only in specific cases of bespoke or force majeure requirements. Management continue to nurture the strong value for money culture inherent throughout the organisation.



## Financial Planning

### Financial and Treasury management

The Finance Division, in conjunction with our parent Department, Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources (DCENR), successfully met both strategic and operational funding requirements during 2015.

### Funding for 2015

In 2015 IFI received an exchequer grant of €23.876 million, of which €15.632 related to pay, compared to €15.655 million in 2014 and €17.618 million in 2013. The total cost of pay in 2015 was €19.3 million. IFI also generated €2.9 million in 2015 from other income sources compared to €4.1 million in 2014. This reduction in own resource income is of concern as until 2015 these funds were sufficient to bridge the gap between the pay grant (€15.632) and the actual pay bill (€19.3 million).

An additional €0.5 million was generated from the Salmon Conservation Fund during 2015. This fund is due to be disbursed in 2016 for reinvestment in the conservation and rehabilitation of salmon and sea trout fisheries/habitats. Part of these funds will be made available to angling clubs, federations and similar organisations.

### Pensions Arrears

During the course of compiling the pension register it became obvious that a circular issued by the Department of Finance in 2005 had not been implemented by all Regional Fisheries Boards at that time (prior to the formation of Inland Fisheries Ireland in July 2010). Importantly, the core purpose of the circular was to ease the disproportionate impact of the Old Age Contributory Pension deduction on lower paid workers in the integrated pension scheme. The result of implementing the circular was that it gave lower paid workers a slightly improved pension.

Due to the extent of the Circular it was necessary to retrieve documentation and calculations going back to the 1980s, this was an extremely time consuming and most worthwhile exercise. The final outcome was that 24 individuals were paid arrears totalling €245k covering 14 years of arrears. (Average arrears paid equates to €10.2k per individual.)

IFI grew its ICT Division with the approval of three new posts; a Technical 1 Support, a Technical 2 Support and a Database Administrator\SharePoint Developer. Two of these roles were filled late in 2015, and the Technical 2 Support role has not yet been filled.

## **Network improvements**

All of the regional offices were moved to the IFI domain and network linkages were upgraded at a number of sites. This means that many of the IT functions can be fully administered from the Citywest Headquarters. Also the network links between Regional offices were upgraded to give greater bandwidth for both data and Voice Over IP (VOIP) traffic.

## **Support Desk**

A new ICT Support desk was set up in order to provide ICT support to all IFI staff and offices around the country. The support desk utilises an open source ticketing system whereby support queries are received, queued and resolved in a prioritised manner.

## **Video Conferencing\Collaboration**

A new video conferencing application was implemented during 2015 which has saved both time and money for IFI as it cuts down travel time and associated expenses. It also has many features which enhance collaboration between staff, agencies and vendors. Sharing documents in real time, recording of sessions\meetings (for those unable to attend) are some of the features that have made this technology a valuable tool at IFI.

## Corporate Governance

In 2015 there was continued development of policies and procedures to enhance good corporate governance and to reflect best practice. The 2014 draft Annual Report was submitted to DCENR by the statutory deadline. Coordinated responses were delivered on 71 Parliamentary Questions.

### Internal Audit

The Internal Audit function was tendered in 2015 and RSM McClure Watters were the successful tenderers. RSM McClure Watters confirmed in the Statement of Internal Financial Control for 2015 that systems are in place to provide satisfactory assurance that objectives relating to key financial systems can be achieved.

### Board Members / Meeting Attendance\*

Training Course		Meetings	Appointed	Retired	Term
Chairman*	Fintan Gorman	10	**01/07/2015		5 Years
Board Member	PJ Nally	7	10/09/2013		5 Years
Board Member	Niall Greene	9	01/07/2014		5 Years
Board Member	Martin McEnroe	10	26/02/2014		5 Years
Board Member	Frances Lucy	6	24/03/2015		5 Years
Board Member (Staff)	Sean Coady	1	17/11/2015		5 Years
Ex-officio Board Member	Ciaran Byrne	10	NA		NA
<b>Retired During 2015</b>					
Chairman	Brendan O'Mahony	6	01/07/2010	30/06/2015	5 Years
Board Member	Lal Faherty	4	01/07/2010	30/06/2015	5 Years
Board Member	John Geary	8	03/11/2010	02/11/2015	5 Years
Board Member	Marcus MacMahon	9	17/11/2010	16/11/2015	5 Years

\* There were a total of 10 Board meetings during 2015

\*\* Prior to his appointment as Chairman on July 1st 2015, Fintan Gorman was appointed to the Board on September 10th 2013.





## **Audit & Risk Committee**

The IFI Audit & Risk Committee comprises 4 members and met on 4 occasions in 2015. Dr Frances Lucy was nominated as Chair of this committee. The responsibilities of the Audit & Risk Committee are: to review the annual Financial Statements, to discuss the nature and scope of the audit with the external auditors and review matters arising from audits; to review the Board's statement on internal control systems; to review the internal audit programme and internal audit resourcing; and to consider other topics, as defined by the Board. The Audit & Risk Committee, on behalf of the Board, is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of the risk management process and has commenced a full and comprehensive review of the organisational and field risks.

### **Audit & Risk Committee Members**

Dr Frances Lucy (Chair)

PJ Nally

Fintan Gorman

Vacancy (Lal Faherty was a member prior to his retirement in June of 2015)

*The Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee for 2015 is contained in Appendix VI.*

*Further details of Board and Committee membership are available in Appendix VII.*

## **Protected Disclosures**

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 requires the publication of a report each year relating to the number of protected disclosures made in the preceding year and any actions taken in response to such disclosures.

No protected disclosures were received by Inland Fisheries Ireland in the reporting period up to 31 December 2015.

## Chairman's Statement on Internal Financial Control

In making this statement I have relied on representations made by management of Inland Fisheries Ireland and the assurances provided by our internal auditors. During the period January 1st to December 31st 2015, the Board of IFI was responsible for ensuring that an appropriate system of internal financial control was in operation within the Agency.

The systems which the Board had in place can only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets were safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded and that material errors or irregularities were either prevented or were detected in a timely manner.

The system of internal financial control continues to be based on a framework of regular management information, administrative procedures including segregation of duties, and a system of delegation and accountability. In particular it included:

- Strategic plans and annual budgets which were approved by the Board;
- High level budget reports which reviewed performance against budget and which were reviewed at each Board meeting;
- Senior management meetings consisted of the Chief Executive and Heads of Function including the Head of Finance which met monthly to examine performance against budget and to discuss financial issues affecting the organisation;
- A robust set of recently enhanced procedures;
- An Internal Audit function which monitored compliance with policies and procedures and the of the Audit Committee;
- An Audit Committee which was made up of a minimum of three Board members and which met four times in the year to the 31st of December 2015. The Committee's 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 Boards 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 and Risk Committee reports to the Board.

The Board takes major strategic decisions and meets at regular intervals to monitor performance and plans. The executive management only act within the remit 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.



In respect of the period ended December 31st 2015, there was a review of the effectiveness on the system of internal financial control formally conducted by the Board.

IFI has complied with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) Circular 13/2014 'Management of and Accountability for Grants from Exchequer Funds'.

Like all public sector bodies, IFI continues to face the risk of over reliance on key individuals due to a number of external factors. Management continues to manage this risk insofar as practicable, however this may become less sustainable over time.

**Fintan Gorman**  
Chairman





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# Financial Statements 2015



Financial Statements 2015

INLAND FISHERIES IRELAND  
EXTRACT FROM THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENDITURE AND RETAINED REVENUE RESERVES FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2015

	Notes	2015	
		€	€
<b>Income</b>			
<b>State and EU Funding</b>			
Oireachtas Grants	2	23,875,624	
Net deferred funding for pensions	14c	3,635,661	27,511,285
<b>Other Income</b>	3		2,954,681
<b>Total Income</b>			30,465,966
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Administration	4		5,155,434
Operations	5		26,281,389
			31,436,823
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year before Appropriations</b>			(970,857)
<b>Transfer from / (to) Capital Account</b>			(2,253,690)
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year after Appropriations</b>			(3,224,547)
<b>Balance Brought Forward at 01 January</b>			6,645,367
<b>Balance Carried Forward at 31 December</b>			3,420,820

		2015	
		€	
<b>Surplus / (Deficit) for the Year before Appropriations</b>			(970,857)
<b>Experience gains on retirement benefit obligations</b>			6,499,000
<b>Change in assumptions underlying the present value of retirement benefit obligations</b>			7,890,000
<b>Total actuarial gain/(loss) in the year</b>	14b		14,389,000
<b>Adjustment to deferred retirement benefits funding</b>			(14,389,000)
<b>Other Comprehensive Income for the year</b>			(970,857)

Ireland's Inland Fisheries & Sea Angling Resource



## Appendices



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## Appendix I: Prosecutions & Fixed Charge Notices 2015

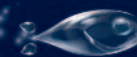


	ERBD	SERBD	SWRBD	ShRBD	WRBD	NWRBD	Total
Prosecutions initiated for Fisheries Offences	5	4	9	8	28	7	61
Prosecutions initiated for Environmental Offences	1	2	4	3	0	2	12
Convictions for Fisheries Offences	6	3	20	4	28	4	65
Convictions for Environmental Offences	1	1	3	3	0	3	11
Cases Appealed	0	0	0	1	2	0	3
Fixed Charges Notices	69	17	51	43	84	25	289

## Appendix II: Reported Fish Kills in 2015

River Basin District	Location of Fish Kill
Eastern	Monalty Lough, County Monaghan
Eastern	Proules River, County Monaghan
Eastern	Upper Camac River, Dublin
Eastern	Corduff River, Dublin (Baleally Stream)
Eastern	Grand Canal Basin, Dublin
South Eastern	River Gully, Dunmore, Durrow, County Laois
South Eastern	Polfour Bridge Stream, Fethard On Sea, County Wexford
South Eastern	Glengalla, Kildance, County Tipperary
South Eastern	Kilminchy Pond, Portlaoise, County Laois
Shannon	Drumcramogue River, River Camogue, County Limerick
Shannon	River Clodiagh, Tullamore River, County Offaly
Shannon	Glosa River, Maigne Catchment, Co. Limerick
Shannon	Tralee Bay – Sprat beached, County Kerry
South Western	Carrigadrohid Reservoir, County Cork
South Western	Cockle Strand Crookhaven, County Cork
South Western	Fourmilewater Estuary, Durrus, County Cork
South Western	Cloghane, County Kerry (sea based)
South Western	Blennerville Canal, Tralee, County Kerry
South Western	Wallis Bridge, Finnow River, County Cork
North Western	Killydoon, Drumbannow, Grousehall, County Cavan
North Western	Lisnadarragh, Darkley Shinan, County Cavan
North Western	Killycreeney Lake, County Cavan
North Western	Knockataggart, Clifferna, County Cavan

## Appendix III: Angling Development Works During 2015



	ERBD	SERBD	SWRBD	ShRBD	WRBD	NWRBD	Total
Angling Facility Enhancement Projects	8	1	0	10	5	9	33
Investment in Angling Facility Enhancement (€euros) (Excluding Salmon Conservation Projects)	€5,000	€15,664	0	€76,564	€69,016	€53,700	€219,944
Stiles, Footbridges, Platforms Replaced	11	2	0	61	28	160	262
New Additional Fishing Spaces Created	56	2	0	126	4	0	188
Coarse Fish transferred within the Region	1,500	0	0	8*	777*	0	2285

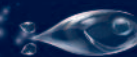
\*Refers to pike relocated from stock management operations



## Appendix IV: Fishing Licences & RBD Managed Fisheries 2015

Salmon/ Sea Trout Angling Licences	ERBD	SERBD	SWRBD	ShRBD	WRBD	NWRBD	Total
Sold through Distributors & Online	1,114	1,069	4,544	825	7,739	3,169	18,460
Commercial Salmon Licences Issued	ERBD	SERBD	SWRBD	ShRBD	WRBD	NWRBD	Total
Private Draft Net	-	-	11	1	2	-	14
Public Draft Net under Control of Fishing for Salmon Order (CFSO)	-	-	32	22	15	2	71
Special Local Draft Net	-	-	-	12	12	8	32
Snap Net	-	-	7	-	-	-	7
Other	-	-	1	-	-	-	1
Totals	-	-	51	35	29	10	125
Dealer Licences Issued	ERBD	SERBD	SWRBD	ShRBD	WRBD	NWRBD	Total
Salmon/ Sea Trout Dealers	50	24	33	12	37	14	170
Molluscan Dealers	69	24	26	25	25	3	172
Oyster Dredge Licences	0	0	79	0	96	24	199
IFI Managed Fisheries	ERBD	SERBD	SWRBD	ShRBD	WRBD	NWRBD	Total
Number of Fisheries Managed	1	0	10	25	11	8	55
Derived Revenue (€)	1,720	0	78,089	108,755	240,564	38,634	467,762

## Appendix V: Salmon Conservation Fund Allocated During 2015



### IFI Projects Allocated Funding – from 2014 Fund

### Allocated

1	National Salmon Conservation Assessment 2015	€ 117,890
2	River Boyne Atlantic Salmon PIT Tagging Project 2015	€ 8,634
3	Curly Hole Rehabilitation Project, River Boyne.	€ 16,863
4	Provision of consultancy services for design of Fish Pass, at White River, Drummin Mill, Dunleer, Co. Louth	€ 13,000
5	Provision of consultancy services to provide a site assessment for a fish counter on the River Glyde at Tallanstown, Co. Louth.	€ 3,000
6	Lackagh Fish Counter	€ 210,069
7	Clondulane Weir Removal Project	€ 53,475
8	Fish Pass Improvement Works at Castletown Bridge on River Douglas, (Barrow Tributary)	€ 8,000
9	Improve Fish Pass at Clashdog Bridge (Clodiagh Tributary, River Suir), Clonea, Co. Waterford	€ 6,000
10	Bank Protection Kings River, Callan, Co. Kilkenny	€ 21,500
11	Clare River Enhancement	€ 52,744
12	Dunkellin River Enhancement	€ 38,891
Total funds allocated to IFI Applicants		€ 550,066

### Contributor Projects Allocated Funding – from 2014 Fund

### Allocated

13	Glenturk River Rehabilitation - Phase 2	€ 15,000
14	Glenamoy River Rehabilitation - Repair rock armour and silt removal	€ 10,830
15	Lislea River Enhancement - Phase 2	€ 14,757
16	Tremblestown River Rehabilitation Project - Phase 2	€ 15,000
17	Enniskerry Salmon Project	€ 2,000
18	Yellow River Phase 3	€ 14,262
19	Upper Blackwater (Tributary of River Boyne)	€ 4,402
20	Improvements to Martry River (Tributary of Blackwater)	€ 15,000
21	River Laune - Brodericks Rock Pool	€ 15,000
22	River Laune – O'Connor Fishery	€ 15,000
23	River Bank Protection works on the River Suir at Neddans, Ardfinnan, Co. Tipperary	€ 15,000
24	Little Brosna Project	€ 9,000
25	Rehabilitation of Salmon Spawning areas on Nenagh River	€ 12,963
26	Tree Pruning & Construction of Weirs to Derryoover River	€ 10,000
Total funds allocated to IFI Applicants		€ 168,214

## Appendix VI: Annual Report of the Audit and Risk Committee of Inland Fisheries Ireland – Year Ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2015

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## 1.1 Foreword

This annual report for the Audit and Risk Committee of IFI is a synopsis of its key functions and outputs for 2015. This includes an initial outline of committee members with the number and dates of committee meetings held in that year. The roles and responsibilities of the audit and risk committee are clearly laid out in detail. The work of the committee during 2015 focused on reviewing a number of IFI activities, including tendering, policy, systems and capital expenditure. From its inception in 2010, this committee had been called the Audit Committee but in December 2015, the new title of Audit and Risk Committee was adopted to strengthen and emphasise its role in relation to risk.

Dr Frances Lucy  
Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee

## 1.2 Membership of the Audit & Risk Committee

### 1.2.1 CURRENT MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE

Dr Frances Lucy  
Mr Fintan Gorman  
Mr Peter John Nally

The Committee would like to thank Lal Faherty who retired from the Board of Inland Fisheries Ireland on June 30th 2015, for his diligent and committed work on the Committee. I would also like to thank Fintan Gorman who was nominated as Chairman of the Committee until his appointment as Board Chairman in July 2015. I was delighted to be appointed as Chair of the Committee at the December 3rd meeting.

### 1.2.2 COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Audit & Risk Committee's terms of reference requires the Committee to meet not less than four times a year. The Committee met on April 16th, June 18th, September 17th and December 3rd.

In addition the CEO, Dr Ciaran Byrne and the Head of Finance and ICT, Pat Doherty were invited to attend all meetings. Other officers of the organisation were invited to meet and report to the Committee on specific matters and the external Internal Auditor attended the meeting in June.

### 1.3 Roles and Responsibilities of the Audit & Risk Committee

1. To review the Annual Financial Statements before submission to the Board, focusing particularly on:
  - Any changes in accounting policies and practices;
  - Major judgmental areas;
  - Significant adjustments resulting from the audit;
  - Compliance with accounting standards.
2. To discuss, with the external auditor, before the audit commences, the nature and scope of the audit;
3. To discuss problems and reservations arising from the interim and final audits and any matters the auditor may wish to discuss (in the absence of management where necessary);
4. To review the Board's statement on internal control systems with particular reference to E.U. funds;
5. To review the internal audit programme; ensure co-ordination between the internal and external auditors; issues raised by the external auditor have been comprehensively and appropriately dealt with; and ensure that the internal audit function is adequately resourced and has appropriate standing within the Board.
6. To consider the major findings of internal investigations and management's response;
7. To consider other topics, as defined by the Board including but not limited to: -
  - Internal procedures and documentation
  - External Audit
  - Review budgeting control
  - Code of practice and ethics
  - Cost saving initiatives
  - Performance management/reporting
  - Management of Risk
8. Any internal audit/audit items that relate to the Board's areas of responsibilities should be communicated to the Board as soon as they are identified.
9. The Committee should also consider:
  - the effectiveness and adequacy of the body's anti-fraud, anti-corruption and protected disclosure policies and staff awareness of them; and
  - whether financial control, including delegation structure, enables the organisation to achieve its objectives on a value for money basis;



- whether the procedures for investment appraisal are fit for purpose and comply with best practice including the principles and relevant requirements of the Public Spending Code;

## **1.4 The work of the Audit & Risk Committee during 2015 focused on:**

The Committee carried out reviews of the following activities;

- IFI's tender for the licencing of Aashleagh Lodge and Fishery on the Erriff Fishery in Killary Harbour.
- IFI's architectural and building tender for the fit-out of the new Logistics & Research Centre at Citywest replacing the leased laboratory and warehouse buildings in Swords.
- A thorough review of the use and value for money aspects of the TETRA communications system being piloted by IFI staff.
- The review and approval of IFI's Treasury Management Policy.
- The Committee conducted a capital expenditure review in advance of the Board's review of same.
- The Committee agreed that sufficient time would be set aside before the commencement of all Audit & Risk committee meetings for members to raise issues without the executive present.
- One of the key roles of the Audit & Risk Committee is to review the effectiveness of the risk management process.
- A revised Risk Management Policy was approved and recommended for adoption by the Board.
- Raising the profile of risk – a review of the Terms of Reference of the Audit Committee was undertaken to strengthen and emphasise the role of the Committee in relation to risk. The Committee adopted the new title of Audit & Risk Committee following its December 3rd meeting.
- A roadmap for a revised risk register was drawn up for 2016.



## 1.5 Comptroller & Auditor General

The Audit & Risk Committee have a professional working relationship with the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG), with all significant audit findings communicated to the C&AG. The Committee met with a representative of the Comptroller & Auditor General by way of teleconference.

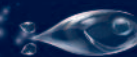
## 1.6 Priorities for 2016

- Ensure the IFI Internal Audit Plan 2015-2017 continues to be rolled out
- Work with the Comptroller and Auditor General in delivering audit satisfaction
- Ensure value for money Fleet Management is progressed
- Complete a review of the funding status of IFI
- Deliver on the Risk Register roadmap
- Perform External Review of Effectiveness of the Audit & Risk Committee
- Appointment of suitably qualified members to the Audit & Risk Committee

## 1.7 Conclusion

The members of the Committee would like to acknowledge the co-operation and assistance during the year of the staff of Inland Fisheries Ireland. Progress can be reported in relation to value for money initiatives, cost saving measures and accountability for taxpayers money. The Audit & Risk Committee is satisfied that, in general, there are adequate systems of control across the organisation.

## Appendix VII: Amounts Paid to Board members for the 12 months ended December 31<sup>st</sup> 2015



	Mileage & Subsistence	Fees & Remuneration
	€	€
Brendan O'Mahony (Outgoing Chair) <sup>4</sup>	5,556	5,985
Fintan Gorman (Current Chair) <sup>1 **</sup>	10,571	9,833
Lal Faherty <sup>1,4</sup>	4,493	3,848
Dr Frances Lucy <sup>1,5</sup>	3,644	-
John Geary <sup>2,3</sup>	3,082	6,466
Marcus MacMahon <sup>2,3</sup>	2,231	2,689
Peter John Nally <sup>1</sup>	4,939	7,695
Martin McEnroe	6,274	7,695
Niall Greene	3,456	7,695
Sean Coady <sup>6</sup>	569	948
	44,816*	52,854

Some members also serve on Board sub-committees:

<sup>1</sup> denotes Audit & Risk Committee

<sup>2</sup> denotes Property Sub Committee

<sup>3</sup> term ended November 2015

<sup>4</sup> term ended June 2015

<sup>5</sup> appointed to the Board March 2015 - 5 year term

<sup>6</sup> appointed to the Board November 2015


\*\*appointed Chairperson 1st July 2015

\* rounding to nearest euro









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