



Fisheries Protection–2016 Overview

Introduction

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) 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 from baselines.

The species protected comprise all freshwater fish species including migratory species such as salmon, sea trout, eel as well as lamprey.

IFI is also responsible for protecting certain molluscs including oysters and through a MOU with the SFPA enforces bass fisheries legislation.

In addition to enforcing the provisions of the Fisheries Acts 1959 to 2010, IFI is empowered to enforce the Water Pollution Acts 1977 & 1990 when discharges to fisheries sensitive locations impacts on water leading to deterioration in water quality and on occasion fish kills.

Protecting our Fisheries

In 2016, over 188,000 man hours were dedicated to safeguarding Ireland’s fisheries resource in a protection programme which comprised planned day and night patrols, covert patrols and intelligence led surveillance operations.

Protection Patrols were carried out using a suite of different methods on lakes, rivers, estuaries and at sea. This protection programme specifically targeted the species most at risk during particular seasons and covered salmon, trout, sea trout, conservation species, bass, coarse fish including pike, as well as oysters. Emphasis is placed on monitoring known poaching hotspots with protection efforts strengthened at vulnerable times.

2016 Statistical Snapshot





During the year, 108,186 man hours were dedicated to patrolling rivers with activity peaking in Q3 of 2016 when 34,372 man hours were utilised patrolling rivers nationwide. A total of 37,263 man hours were dedicated to patrolling lakes with the greatest activity taking place in Q2 with 12,245 man hours being recorded for this period. Man hours committed to patrolling coastal, estuary and sea areas totalled 42,956 man-hours for 2016.

National Figures in 2016 and 2015

Man-hours on Area Patrols	2016	2015
Man-hours of Lake Patrols	37,263	36,808
Man-hours of River Patrols	108,186	96,057
Man-hours of Sea Patrols	6,197	6,161
Man-hours of Coastal/Estuary Patrols	36,759	39,330
Total	188,404	172,195

RBD Figures for 2016

Area Patrols	ERBD	SERBD	SWRBD	Shannon RBD	WRBD	NWRBD	National Total
Man-hours of Lake Patrols	8350	301	6508	7542	6331	8231	37,263
Man-hours of River Patrols	15486	16318	16170	12050	29376	18786	108,186
Man-hours of Sea Patrols	85	337	854	464	1792	2665	6,197
Man-hours of Coastal/Estuary Patrols	4825	7614	11310	2846	9159	1006	36,759

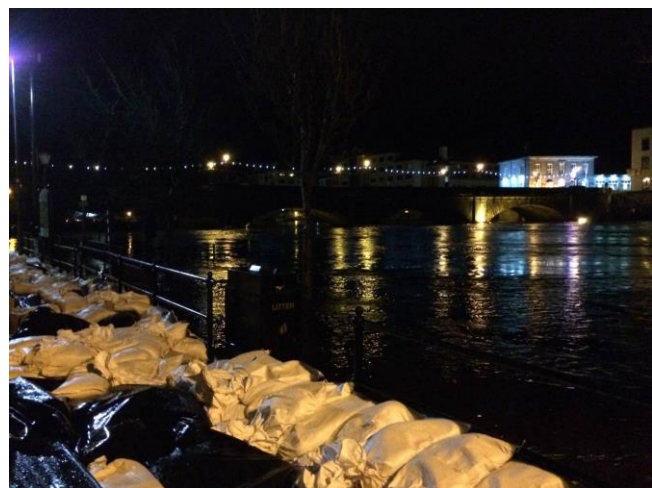
Man-hours assisting Emergency Services

In 2016, a minimum of 361 man hours of assistance was provided to the various emergency services. IFI assisted with flood relief works and also in the search for missing fishermen and anglers.

In particular, IFI offered flood relief support when operational teams from the Shannon RBD and the WRBD were deployed to Athlone to assist in areas worse affected by flooding. They assisted with sand bagging houses, manning pumps and ferrying people through floods in jeeps.

Some of these activities involved sustained efforts over days and weeks. Later in January IFI staff were deployed on a shift basis to help man pumping stations in Athlone. This involved the supervision of 6-8 pumps on a 24/7 basis at two locations: the Jolly Mariner and Brick Island area of Athlone East. IFI's assistance was much appreciated by the locals, some of whom hadn't slept properly in weeks as they had been maintaining pumps round the clock until help arrived. IFI staff input into this process allowed them some relief. IFI Roscommon staff also assisted at two other locations in mid-Roscommon: Ballynaheglish and Athleague. This mainly involved placing sandbags around dwelling houses and business

Emergency Services 2016	SERBD	Shannon RBD	WRBD	NWRBD	National Total
Man-hours assisting the Emergency Services (Gardaí, Coastguard etc) premises.	8	246	67	40	361



Figures 1 & 2: IFI staff on 24/7 duty in Athlone at the Jolly Mariner/Brick Island area in Athlone and sandbag defence at the strand area Athlone (right).



Figures 3 & 4: Emergency sand bagging works at houses in Castleplunket (left) and Athleague (right). IFI staff helped out with these defense efforts at numerous locations. These are Turlough areas that filled/rose to unprecedented levels.



How IFI Patrol Our Fisheries

IFI utilises a range of methods to patrol fisheries around Ireland. The principle methods used for water based patrols are boats, kayaks and PWCs (Personal Water Craft). Land based patrols are carried out using quads, bicycles, vehicles and foot patrols. In addition to the use of traditional patrol methods, the availability of advanced surveillance equipment including night vision scopes, infra-red heat sensing scopes and enhanced optical surveillance scopes have proven instrumental in the apprehension of a number of individuals.

National Figures in 2016 and 2015

Patrol Methods	National Total 2016	National Total 2015
No. of Boat Patrols	1,151	824
No. of Bicycle Patrols	363	528
No. of Quad Patrols	84	33
No. of Kayak Patrols	188	310
No. of PWC Ski Patrols	37	13
No. of Vehicle & Foot Patrols	29,357	27,056
Total	31,180	28,764

RBD Figures in 2016

Patrol Methods	ERBD	SERBD	SWRBD	Shn RBD	WRBD	NWRBD	National Total
No. of Boat Patrols	38	174	48	372	333	186	1,151
No. of Bicycle Patrols	145	14	18	2	177	7	363
No. of Quad Patrols	0	32	0	0	0	52	84
No. of Kayak Patrols	77	17	19	19	56	0	188
No. of PWC Patrols	0	0	13	9	15	0	37
No. of Vehicle/Foot Patrols	5,578	1,951	3,179	2,049	13,057	3,543	29,357



Inspections of Anglers

During the year, 36,979 inspections of recreational anglers as well as licence holders were carried out nationwide. During these inspections a total of 160 Fixed Charge Penalty Notices were issued for breaches of the fisheries acts and more particularly specified regulations and byelaws. Some 195 anglers received cautions from fisheries staff where very minor breaches were detected.

National Figures for 2016 and 2015

Inspections of Licence Holders	National Total 2016	National Total 2015
Inspections of Commercial Salmon & Sea Trout Licence holders	969	896
Inspections of Recreational Anglers for Licence and/or Permit	16,499	17,042
Inspections of other Anglers	19,511	17,254
Total	36,979	35,192

RBD Figures for 2016

Inspections of Licence Holders	ERBD	SERBD	SWRBD	Shannon RBD	WRBD	NWRBD	National Total
Inspections of Commercial Salmon & Sea Trout Licence holders	17	0	235	464	210	43	969
Inspections of Recreational Anglers for Licence and/or Permit	1,713	833	3,456	4,074	5,344	1,079	16,499
Inspections of other Anglers	6,137	2,047	1,330	2,634	4,981	2,382	19,511

Illegal Items Seized

An extensive range and number of items were seized during 2016 ranging from fishing rods, dinghies, spears, hand lines and nets. In total 1,487 illegal fishing items were seized which included 301 nets measuring 14,782m.



Figure 5 & 6 : Staff unloading 900m of drift net seized at sea off Porturlin in Co. Mayo in June (left) and one of two 25m fyke nets seized from a concealed location on the shores of Lough Conn at Pontoon (right).

National Figures for Items Seized in 2016 and 2015.

Description of Item Seized in 2016	National Total 2016	National Total 2015
Rod & Line	204	208
Fish	820	534
Nets	301	345
Other Equipment	162	134
Total items Seized	1,487	1,221
Total Length of Net (m)	14,782	14,539

Environmental Inspections


22,066
Environmental
Inspections

Water Quality/Pollution

A wide range of environmental issues were addressed during this period and over 22,000 environmental inspections were carried out. The breakdown for which is detailed below.

2016 Environmental Inspections	National Total 2016	National Total 2015
Farm Inspections	1,553	2,228
Industrial Premises	660	658
Wastewater & Water Treatment Plants	1,994	2,019
Civil Eng. Works/Infrastructure	2,651	2,020
Forestry Sites	810	677
Wind Farms Inspected	205	188
General Inspections for Pollution in Habitats	14,193	11,626
Total	22,066	19,416

Environmental Inspections by RBD in 2016

2016 Environmental Inspections	ERBD	SERBD	SWRBD	Shannon RBD	WRBD	NWRBD	National Total
Farm Inspections	212	164	148	689	189	151	1,553
Industrial Premises	110	108	38	47	92	265	660
Wastewater & Water Treatment Plants	599	215	190	297	269	424	1,994
Civil Eng. Works/Infrastructure	535	667	458	303	386	302	2,651
Forestry Sites	29	345	83	190	141	22	810
Wind Farms Inspected	0	19	30	96	54	6	205
General Inspections for Pollution in Habitats	1,758	1,017	783	920	794	8,921	14,193

Fish Kills

There were 31 reported incidents of fish kills in 2016.



Prosecutions for Illegal Activity

In 2016, 103 prosecution cases were initiated for breaches of fisheries and environmental legislation.

Prosecution is regarded as one of the most important deterrents in terms of preventing illegal fishing activities in the long-term. In order to secure a prosecution very many hours of dedicated surveillance may be required as well as a very significant amount of time preparing and presenting a case. As a result of the protection patrols and anglers inspections detailed above a total of 82 prosecution cases were initiated in relation to fisheries offences and 54 convictions were recorded for fisheries offences. In 2016 there was 21 prosecution cases initiated for environmental offences and 12 convictions.

Prosecutions	Total 2016
Prosecutions initiated for Fisheries Offences	82
Prosecutions initiated for Environmental Offences	21
Total Prosecutions Initiated	103
Fisheries cases concluded	54
Environmental cases concluded	12
Total Prosecutions Cases Concluded	66

Conclusion

2016 was another very successful year in terms of protecting the fisheries resource. The number of apprehensions and the range of offences recorded in 2016 affirmed the need for strict enforcement and continued protection of the fisheries resource in 2017.