



# THE IRISH ANGLING ALLIANCE

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### Serious Mis-Management of our Natural Resources

Regardless of the front that is put on angling in Ireland is in crisis.

The thriving tourist industry of 15 to 20 years ago is long gone.

Every ferry leaving the UK between the months of April and October were full of anglers making the annual pilgrimage to fish our once abundant rivers and lakes. The situation is now long gone.

The paid representatives who should be protecting our valuable coarse fish stocks wantonly slaughter pike without any modern scientific data to back up their mindless actions.

As long as anybody can remember live baiting in this country has been an illegal activity. It is a law which in principal I agree with. Any angler who dares to put one small live fish on a hook is liable to prosecution and yet inland fisheries Ireland, the very body who should be protecting our natural resources spend thousands of tax payers money slaughtering pike in a cruel and sadistic manner. \*\*\*

I quote the case which was heard in Castlepollard District Court which took place in 2005. It was brought against two anglers who were attempting to remove pike from gill nets. When the principals of gill netting was explained to Judge John F, Neilan he told ~~me~~ Matt Nolan of the Shannon Regional Fisheries board to step forward. The enraged Judge told him that it should be him standing in the dock charged with cruelty. He told him, you are creating a greater difficulty, go on get out of my court.

As we all know this cruelty is still carried out today. The Irish are a much loved friendly civilised nation and yet we are now scorned by the rest of the World for what is being allowed to take place.

There were, not that long ago four tourist operators sending anglers to Ireland. There is now just one who has had to diversify to stay afloat.

It is my firm opinion that there is not one individual working within the IFI who has the knowledge to correctly manage what was once our finest assets. This needs correcting immediately and so do the current out dated policies.

# The pointless task of Pike management

The Pointless and wasteful task of Pike management will be the demise of some of the greatest assets this country has to offer, not only are we destroying the greatest gene pool of northern Pike but, we are destroying the brown trout strain that makes this country an angling mecca.

The evidence is there to see, from the early 60s up to now the volume and quality of both species has had a massive decline with the increase of Perch and hybrids. If you continue to carry out this Barbaric policy of culling the apex predator you will destroy the trout stocks, this evidence can be seen in the 2012 lough Corrib survey when compared to the 1996 survey.

The evidence is there in historic records to show how fantastic the trout fishing was on these lakes for hundreds of years before some so-called scientist decided to remove pike to increase trout stocks. If you look back on the records of pike recorded on these lakes in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early twentieth century you will see that these lakes produced some of the largest Northern pike recorded anywhere in the world and the trout stocks and quality were fantastic.

I ask you to look at the facts of your own surveys and see what you are doing is both ethically, morally and financially wrong, you are doing it to please people who were misguided by yourselves in the 50s, admit you were wrong and re-educate these people so that their grandchildren can experience the fishing that their grandfathers experienced, bring in an independent scientific crew and let them prove it to them.

By removing the pike you have unleashed an even bigger monster, the Perch, they will destroy the feeding beds that the trout rely on and the trout fry will be decimated.

Below I have posted some images of the barbaric practice from the early sixties to the present day and below them you will see the result of a sixteen year survey, it does not work, it is destroying both species and we are all losing out on our sport and on tourism, after all, who would not like to visit a country that has monster pike like we had before this madness started, 30, 40, 50, 60 and even reports as high as 90lb pike on these lakes in the past, with the average brown trout coming to fly at 3 to 4lb.

If pike were ever going to decimate the trout on these lakes it would have happened over one hundred years ago, be honest with yourselves and see that it is wrong, make a difference and stop this madness before it is too late and both species are at the point of no return.

Thank you



### 3. Results

The results presented within this section are preliminary. A detailed and comprehensive report and review of the status of the Lough Corrib brown trout fishery will be made available and published later in 2012.

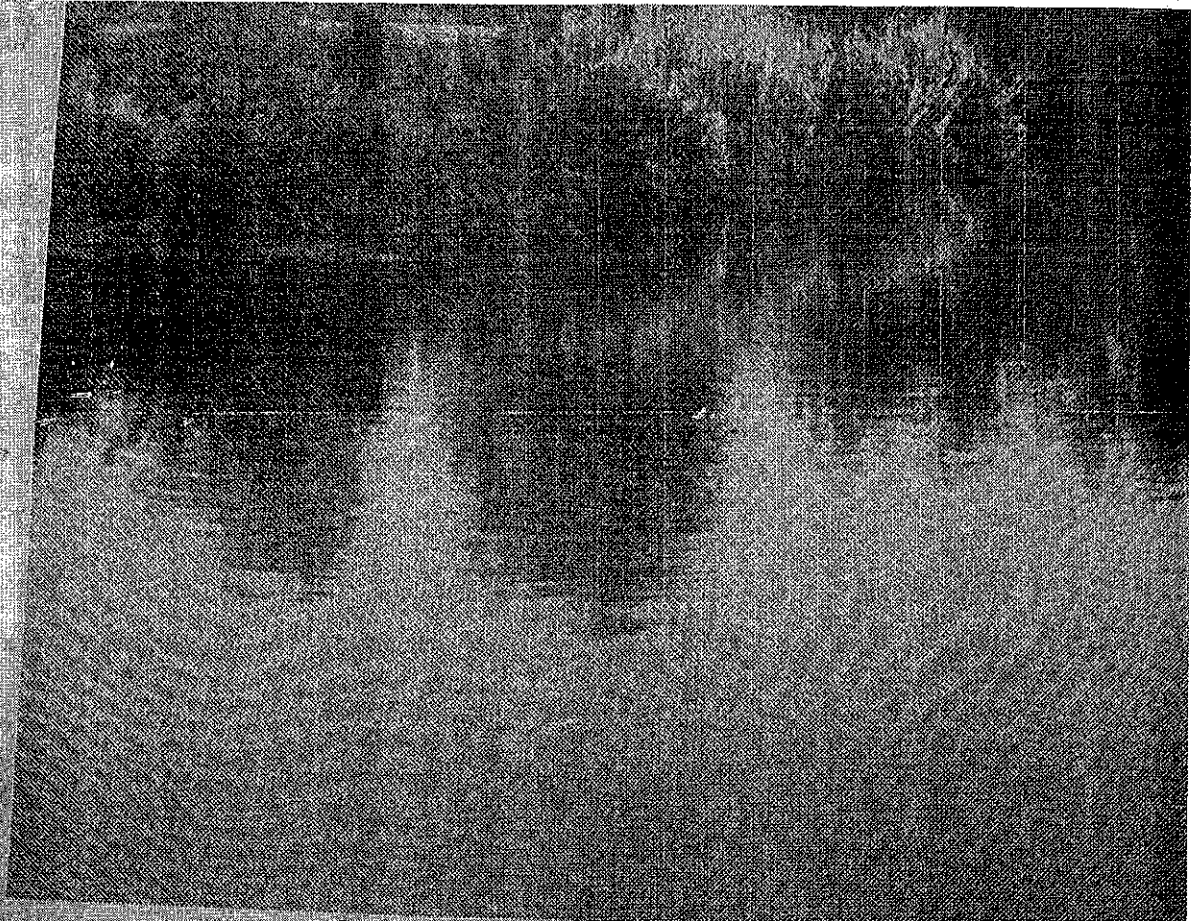
The total numbers of fish captured in both (1996 and 2012) surveys are outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. L. Corrib Survey Catches

Fish Species	1996			2012		
	Released	Retained	Total	Released	Retained	Total
Brown Trout	358	130	488	259	125	384
Pike	0	461	461	13	231	248
Perch	0	21	21	0	687	687
Roach	0	1240	1240	0	1409	1409
Rudd	0	5	5	0	1	1
Bream	0	0	0	0	33	33
Roach/Bream Hybrids	0	63	63	0	642	642
Rudd/Bream Hybrids	0	1	1	0	0	0
Salmon Kelts	0	1	1	4	1	5
Salmon Smolts	0	0	0	0	1	1
Charr	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adult Lamprey	0	0	0	0	1	1

Data indicate a number of significant changes in the relative abundance of different fishes in the stock in 2012 compared to 1996 (Table 1). The most significant changes can be summarised as follows:-

1. There has been a marked decline in trout numbers – from 488 fish in 1996 to 384 fish in 2012.
2. A very significant reduction in the adult pike population is evident – from 461 fish in 1996 to 248 individuals in 2012.
3. A major recovery in perch stocks is evident with the catch increasing from 21 in the 1996 survey to 687 fish in 2012.
4. The adult Roach population recorded in both years is similar – 1240 fish in 1996 and 1409 individuals in 2012.



**From Hi Regan's How and Where to Fish in  
Ireland (1902)**

The Nore [River] is now spoilt – the pike and poachers prevailed. Mr. Despard's herd [herdsman] killed at Coolrain a monster pike 42 lb.

...motor, was probably the only  
man in Ireland who had the information I  
wanted. He turned out to be the grandson of  
Pat Summerville\* who was gillie to Sir Patrick  
Manson - the man who had caught the pike.

\*Pat Summerville caught a huge pike himself (No. 21,  
page 228).

## Shamus Hogan's Pike

110 Weight: 39 lb Length: 50½ in. Place: L

From the Field, 24 June 1911, p. 241

### *Monster Irish pike*

From my recent annual Mayfly dapping for those  
gladid Lough Derg trout I am pleased to record,  
through your favour, the fortunate riddance of  
another 'undesirable' - to wit, a pike somewhat  
exceeding 39 lb. It was killed on a shallow by a gun-  
ner by a native of Derg's shores, one Shamus

# Peter Lydon's Pike

55 Weight: 45 lb Place: Lough Corrib, Ireland

From the *Angling Times*, 28 May 1965

## *Long line puts paid to huge pike*

The clearing of predatory fish from one of Ireland's loughs has produced some huge pike - several weighing more than 40lb each were taken.

Work is going on in lower Lough Corrib (Co. Galway) to improve the trout fishing. The latest of the huge pike to be taken was a 45 pounder.

The fish had only just spawned and it was estimated that it would have weighed more than 50lb\* if it had been in good condition. The pike was taken on a long line baited with a live Perch.

\*The estimate of the pike's weight is on the low side. It would have weighed over 56 lb before spawning.



Peter Lydon (left) holding the 45 lb pike he caught on Lower Lough Corrib on perch-baited longline. (Courtesy of P. Darling Connought Tribune)

... unknown man).  
The derelict little church, also named St Mary's, seemingly only a hand's clasp away from the hall, together with its miniature graveyard, prepared me - as churches and graveyards always do - to appreciate what life must have been like centuries ago.

... acres of land while it protected the primordial complex of Munden.  
To me, the scene depicting a pike of 42 lb - in a putrid state - with teeth as long as a greyhound - drawn up dead - after a great frost - was easy to visualize. I am unable to condone the theft of such a prize as the ceased relic.

## Patsy Burrell's Pike

66 Weight: 42 lb 5 oz Place: Loughrea, Ireland



The 42 lb 5 oz pike netted from Loughrea on 17 March 1960 by Patsy Burrell of the Loughrea Angling Association.

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tendent for the Inland Fisheries Trust, together with a second pike weighing 39 lb (see No. 115 for a photograph of both pike).

Pike up to 50½ lb have been taken from Lough Mask by the Inland Fisheries Trust, but the 48-pounder is the largest one that was photographed. Lough Mask is probably the richest unpolluted piece of water that we have left in the whole of Ireland and the United Kingdom – although the problem of eutrophication\*, which is causing such concern in many places, may yet rear its head.

\*Since the end of the Ice Age and until relatively recently, the majority of British and Irish mountain lakes were oligotrophic, or poor in dissolved nutrient salts. Where the



my set up and my 37 1/2 lb English...

until they are boiled; if they are set up they gain weight often. -Ed.)

147 Weight: 37 3/4 in. Length: 54 1/2 in. Girth: 25 in. Place: Lough Ramor, Ireland  
Date: 1876

140 Weight: 38 lb Place: Lough Owel, Ireland Captor: Inland Fisheries Trust  
Date: March 1978

## The Dringeen Bay Pike

139 Weight: 38 lb Place: Lough Mask, Ireland



Dringeen Bay is connected to Lough Mask during the winter, when the level of the lough is high. At this time, the big pike move in. During March 1978 the Inland Fisheries Trust caught their two biggest Mask pike of the season in gill nets set in Dringeen Bay. Of these, the larger weighed 38 lb.

Des Elliott, a noted Dublin trout fisherman, holding Dringeen Bay 38-pounder. (Author's photo)

down the river you would pass under an over-  
the pike. If you paddled the se-  
took t



A Lough Mask pike netted in March 1957  
by the Inland Fisheries Trust. Weight: 46 lb  
Length: 47½ in. Holding the fish is Dr  
Michael Kennedy, one of the Trust's  
scientists. (Courtesy of the Irish Times)

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Colonel Thornton, P...  
ever (c. 1790) to catch pike on Loch Lomond  
(he called his trimmers *hounds*).

When Tommy had finished telling his story  
I asked a question which I didn't need to ask  
for myself but which nevertheless, is a question  
that a man who fishes with both rod and trim-  
mer is bound to be asked if he has caught a  
record fish: 'Is there any question of your big  
torr).

## A Lough Mask Netted Pike

41 Weight: 48 lb Length: 56 in  
Place: Lough Mask, Ireland

When in 1970 I wrote to the secretary of the  
Castlebar Trout Anglers' Association of the  
hopes of getting a print from the museum  
negative, I got a reply from M. Cawell, the  
new secretary. He advised me of the fish's  
death and sent me another picture of the 48 lb  
pike being held up by M. Cawell and another

for Wm. Agnew Ltd  
for Wm. Agnew Ltd

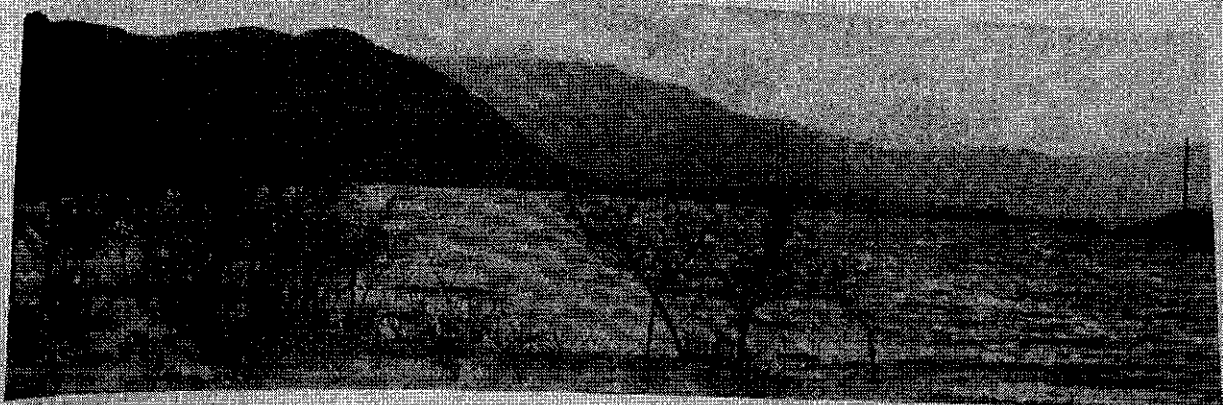
As Marshall Hardy pointed out, the fact that  
the Avery machine was in everyday commercial  
use was good enough evidence of its accuracy  
(commercial weighing machines are regularly  
checked by the Weights and Measures  
authorities).



TERRY KEE

# A Lough Mask Netted Pike

115 Weight: 39 lb Place: Lough Mask, Ireland



These two huge pike were netted from Lough Mask by the Inland Fisheries Trust in 1963. The smaller of the two pike, held up by Mr McVeigh, one of the Trust's superintendents, weighed 39 lb. The larger pike weighed 48 lb (see No. 41). The combined weight of the brace, 87 lb, is unlikely to be bettered by any brace of red-caught pike.

Above: Upper Lough Mask.





