

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

from the

Central Fisheries Board

**on its activities during 2003 and those of each
Regional Board and Fisheries Cooperative Society**



April 2004

Mission Statement

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

The Fisheries Boards

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

The principal functions of the Central Fisheries Board are to:

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

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

Central Fisheries Board Members

- Mr. Bill McLysaght (Chairman)
- Mr. Paddy Byrne
- Ms. Paula Carroll
- Ms. Marian Corcoran (Resigned December 2003)
- Dr. Alan Craig
- Mr. Eamon Cusack
- Mr. Lal Faherty
- Dr. James J. King
- Mr. Gerry Marry

Senior Management Team

John O' Connor Chief Executive Officer

Nuala O'Byrne Director of Finance

John Mc Phillips Director of Human Resources

Paddy Fitzmaurice Director of Research

Brian Sheerin Director of Protection & Conservation

Table of Contents

	Page Number
Chairpersons Statement	4
Comment of Chief Executive Officer	7
 Central Fisheries Board	
Finance/IT	8
Human Resources	11
Protection & Conservation	13
Marketing	16
Research	19
 Regional Fisheries Boards	
Eastern Regional Fisheries Board	25
Southern Regional Fisheries Board	29
South Western Regional Fisheries Board	32
Shannon Regional Fisheries Board	38
Western Regional Fisheries Board	43
North Western Regional Fisheries Board	48
Northern Regional Fisheries Board	51
 Appendices	
Appendix 1 – Fisheries Development and Surveys	58
Appendix 2 – Pollution Control and Water Quality	59
Appendix 3 – Fish Stocking	60
Appendix 4 – Fishing Licences and Board Managed Fisheries	61
Appendix 5 – Commercial Salmon and Sea Trout Catches	62
Appendix 6 – Rod and Line Salmon & Sea Trout Catch (2002)	63
Appendix 7 – Marine Tagging Programme	64
Appendix 8 – Deep Sea Angling Logbook Statistics	65

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

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

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

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

In 2003 the Central Board developed, with the aid of outside expertise: -

- a Code of Business Conduct for Board members
- a Code of Business Conduct for Employees, and
- a Customer Charter

The Board members are aware of and are fully compliant with the provisions of the Standards in Public Office Act 2001, and the Code of Business Conduct .The Code of Business Conduct for employees is awaiting Union signoff at the highest level.

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

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

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

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

The Board is satisfied that all the key recommendations of the Spollen Report were implemented.

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

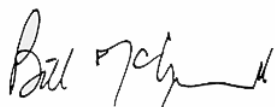
A detailed procedures manual is in the course of preparation and management exercise close supervision over all significant transactions. Major sources of income are subjected to overall reconciliation and, where possible, staff duties are appropriately divided taking account of the risks involved and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

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

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

- There were no commercially significant developments affecting the Board during the year. The Board did not establish any subsidiaries, participate in joint ventures or acquire shares.
- The Board has complied with all appropriate procedures for financial reporting, internal audit, procurement and disposal of assets and has complied with all relevant tax legislation.
- Government policy on the pay of the Board's Chief Executive Officer and all employees is being complied with.
- Government guidelines on payment of director's fees are being complied with; no fees are paid to members of the Board.
- As of now, there have been no significant post balance sheet events. The Board's accounts for 2003 have yet to be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General and, therefore, the Board can only provide draft accounts at this time.
- It is my understanding that the Guidelines for Appraisal and Management of Capital Expenditure Proposals are not relevant to the activities of the Board for the year 2003.

On the basis of the above, I am satisfied that the Board has implemented an adequate system of financial control.

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

Bill McLysaght
Chairperson

Comment of the Chief Executive Officer

In 2003, for the first time the Central and Regional Fisheries Board developed and agreed a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. This SLA set out what service the Boards would provide to the Minister, the Inland Fisheries sector and to its own staff in 2003. Clear targets with measurable performance indicators were set out and quarterly reports provided to the Minister.

In the area of corporate governance the Boards adopted the Government's Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. During 2003 the Central Board developed

- a Code of Business Conduct for Board members,
- a Code of Business Conduct for all staff, and
- a Customer Charter.

These initiatives will be built on in 2004.

In the area of Human Resources development all Fisheries Boards introduced PMDS. Considerable time and resources were committed to ensuring that this key element of the Government's modernisation initiative was successfully implemented. A key focus was the provision of targeted training for all staff.

The Central Board's long running accommodation challenges were advanced considerably during the year with the help of our colleagues in DCM&NR and OPW.

At a national level exciting new ground was broken with the advancement of national policies and strategies for: -

- pike and pike angling
- the use of hatcheries and stocking
- the development of small hydro schemes.

Ireland continues to lead international efforts at advancing the management of Atlantic salmon. The ongoing successful implementation of the wild salmon carcass tagging and quota schemes represents a significant achievement for the Minister, his officials and the staff of the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards. We are now on track to meet the scientifically recommended salmon conservation limits in 2005. Great credit is due to all, not least the commercial salmon fishermen and anglers, in so successfully advancing this management agenda.

Some of our sea trout stocks, particularly along the western seaboard continue to be a major cause of concern. The Fisheries Boards are determined to redress this decline. However, this

cannot be achieved without significant improvement in the management of some salmon farms close to wild sea trout rivers, particularly during the critical spring period.

One of the most exciting developments during 2003 was the completion of the 'Wetted Area' study. This study determined the content of the freshwater salmon habitat in Ireland using GIS. This methodology was then applied in the establishment of salmon quotas for 2004.

In April the economic/socio economic evaluation of wild salmon in Ireland, which was undertaken for the Central Fisheries Board by independent economic consultants, Indecon was published. The Minister then requested the Central Board to undertake a public consultation process on the findings in the report. This public consultation was completed in 2003 and an analysis of the outcome will be presented to the Minister in early 2004.

The Board also developed an education pack for primary schools. This initiative was developed with Blackrock Education Centre and involves an online teacher-training programme featuring inland fisheries material, together with packs in hard copy for the students.

The Central Fisheries Board continued to develop sea angling during the year and our database on 'tag returns' continues to grow. This database is now considered to be quite important in developing our scientific knowledge of the health and movements of these species.

The Board's hatcheries at Roscrea and Mullingar produced brown and rainbow trout to support the Regional Boards and angling industry in the development and promotion of angling. The Board is acutely aware of the important role the voluntary angling sector can play in developing angling, particularly youth angling in Ireland. Against this background the Central Fisheries Board has been working with the Irish Sports Council in supporting the newly established 'Recreational Angling Ireland'. The immediate priority of this body is the development of youth angling.

This report sets out what the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards and the Cooperative Societies have been engaged in over the last year to advance the management of the Inland Fisheries sector in Ireland. Clearly considerable progress was made by all bodies across all elements of the sector in 2003.

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



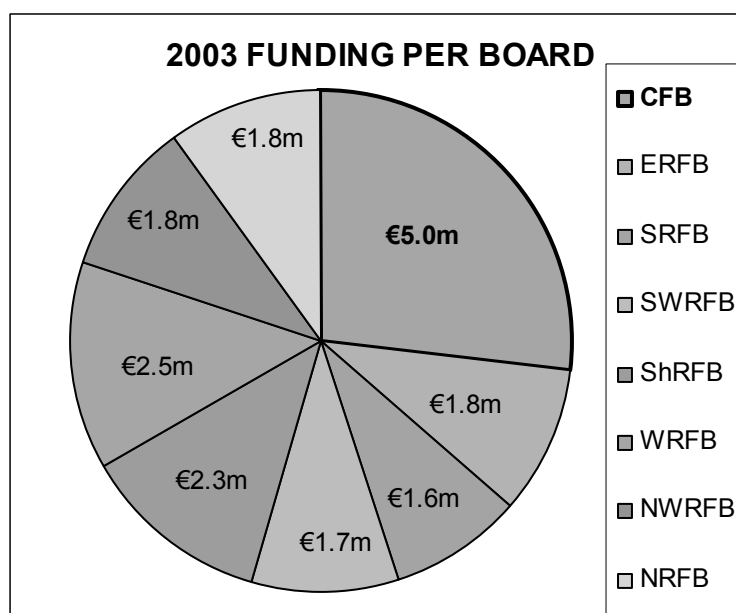
John O'Connor
Chief Executive Officer

Central Fisheries Board

Finance / IT

Budget 2003

In 2003, the Fisheries Boards received an exchequer grant of €18.49m of which Pay costs amounted to €15.6m or 84% of the total grant received. €1.1m was allocated to national programmes, which were co-ordinated by the CFB. The Boards also generated € 3.4 million from other sources which was reinvested in the management, conservation and protection of Inland Fisheries.



2003 Accounts of the Central Board

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

The Finance Division co-ordinated the implementation of the requirements of the Pensions (Amendment) Act 2002, ensuring compliance by all Boards in providing access for staff to one standard PRSA.

Information and Communications Technology

Throughout the year, the Central Fisheries Board developed and improved the ICT systems within the Board. We undertook an audit of our network and systems and implemented improvements in various areas. Having undertaken a review of our core ICT infrastructure, we have engaged consultants to assist in streamlining and developing our overall systems and equipment in line with best ICT practice. Working closely with the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources and external consultants we have commenced the process of developing an overarching ICT strategy.

Once more traffic to the CFB website showed a dramatic increase over the previous year. Website statistics indicate that almost 95,000 visits were made to the website. Users of the site accessed over 470,000 pages, up 57% on 2002. Apart from the comprehensive Game, Sea, River Trout, Pike and Coarse fishing sections of the site, the Irish Angling Update, the Irish Tackle Shop, Charter Boat Directories are major factors in attracting visitors from 55 countries worldwide.

Property Management

Significant progress was made during the year on securing new accommodation for the Board. Suitable accommodation has been made available in Swords and arrangements were advanced to move to these premises. In the interim period, various remedial and health and safety works were carried out on the Glasnevin property, such as the removal of asbestos, replacement of laboratory equipment, rewiring, and upgrading of the heating system.

A property portfolio strategy was developed during the year, the aim of which is to ascertain the ownership of various properties throughout the regions and establish a definitive property portfolio of the Board.

Financial Management

The 2003 accounts incorporated the Chairman's statement of internal financial control, as required under paragraph 10.2(iii) of the Code of practice for the governance of State bodies.

To comply with Financial Reporting Standard FRS 17, the Board engaged an actuary to value the liability of the Board's Defined Benefit Superannuation Scheme. The results of the valuations are noted in the 2003 accounts for each of the Fisheries Boards

Human Resources

Training & Development

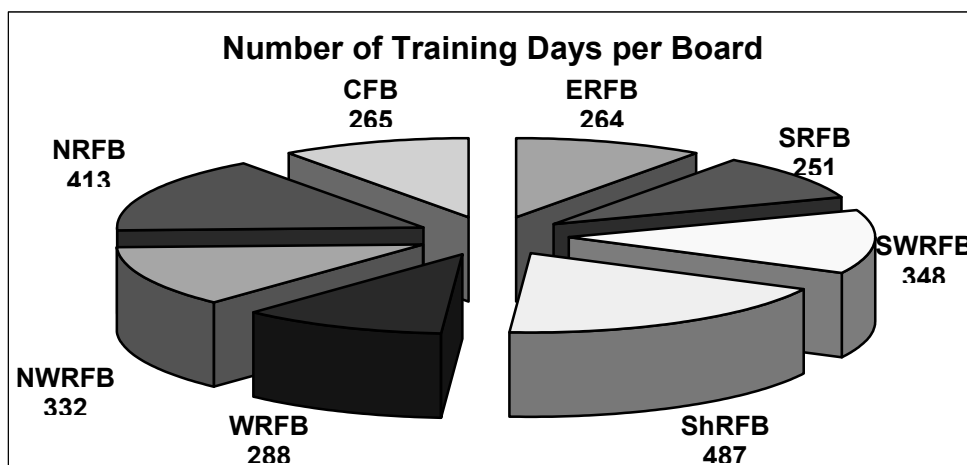
The Central & Regional Fisheries Boards (C&RFB) continued their National Targeted Training Programme in 2003 with an investment of €200k. The plan was developed with input from the Central & Regional Fisheries Boards and addressed the key developmental and training needs of the organisation.

A significant portion of training in 2003 was allocated to the implementation of the Performance Management & Development System (PMDS) for the Fisheries Service. All staff received 3 days training on PMDS to educate and prepare them for their roles in the process.

A Higher National Certificate in Fisheries Management course was developed with the Institute of Technology in Sligo and was successfully launched by Minister of State, Mr. John Browne, T.D in October 2003. The course is currently being attended by 16 mature students from the Regional Fisheries Boards (RFBs) and this first cohort will complete the course in December 2004. Early feedback was very encouraging.

Other key training events in 2003 included Management Development, Conflict Resolution Certification, various Health & Safety programmes, IT training and Skills training.

The total training days for the C&RFB for 2003 was 2,648 which was an average of 6.5 days per staff member, a 46% increase on the number of days training delivered in 2002.



Employee Relations/Change Management

Progress was made with the Trade Unions in developing a challenging and worthwhile modernisation action plan for the Fisheries Service, in the context of the Sustaining Progress Agreement. A number of modernisation initiatives were launched and advanced on a partnership basis including, a range of new H.R. policies and an organisation wide Employee Handbook.

The Boards continued to proactively operate Equal Opportunities policies, while introducing ongoing refinements and new operating guidelines.

The cap on employment numbers, announced by the Minister for Finance in December 2002, has impacted on the filling of certain key posts and as a consequence, the service delivery of the Boards.

Freedom Of Information (FOI) 2003

There were 31 new requests for information made to the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards in 2003, under the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 & 2003. The breakdown of requests was as follows:

- Journalists: 10%
- Business/Interest Groups: 32%
- Staff: 13%
- Others: 45%

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

- 49% Granted
- 24% Part-granted
- 8% Refused
- 19% Handled outside FOI.

Health & Safety

In September 2003, a new Health & Safety Executive was appointed and continued to address priority Health & Safety issues for all Boards including the CFB's accommodation requirements.

Protection & Conservation

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

L.P.V., Naval and Air Corps Operations 2003

	Days on Patrol	No. Of Sightings & Licence Checks	Length of Net Seized (Yards)	No of Prosecutions & Warnings
Bradán Beatha	147	315	3290	13
Cosantóir Bradán	147	365	4270	5
Naval Service	56	154	4330	4
Total	350	834	11890	22

Air Corps Maritime Flights 2003

Number of Flights	7
Number of Sights	130

The Board published the Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme Fisheries Statistics Report 2001 – 2003. This report contains data relating to the 2001 – 2003 commercial salmon fishing seasons and the 2001 and 2002 angling seasons. The coordination and collection of the catch statistics on salmon and sea trout exploitation is a strategic management tool in ensuring the long-term sustainability of these species. The main findings are as follows:

Commercial

- The National Catch of 168,819 was 13,181 below the National Total Allowable Catch (TAC) of 182,000.
- All district catches were below the district Total Allowable Catch set.
- 99% of commercial fishermen returned their completed logbooks
- 92% of commercial salmon catch was sold, 7% was accounted for by domestic consumption and 1% remained unsold at the time of logbook return.

Angling

- 35,024 angling licences were sold in 2002, of these 52% (18,088) returned logbooks, compared with a national return rate of 43% in 2001.
- 68% of anglers who returned logbooks caught no salmon, 29.7% caught between 1-10 fish, whilst 1.7% caught between 11-20 fish.
- The rod catch figures suggest that the most prolific salmon river is the Moy River system in County Mayo.

Catch by all Sectors

- The total number of salmon captured by all methods including angling in 2002 was 236,307 a decrease of 23,168 salmon on the 2001 catch.
- In 2002, 76% of the exploited salmon were captured by drift nets, 10% by draft nets, 2% by other engines and 12% by rod and line.

The Indecon Report entitled 'An Economic/Socio-Economic Evaluation of Wild Salmon in Ireland' was prepared for the CFB by Indecon International Economic Consultants and was published in April 2003. The report assessed the economic impact of salmon angling and commercial fishing and provided a suite of recommendations for the future sustainable management of wild salmon resource in Ireland. As requested by Minister of State Mr. John Browne TD, the CFB undertook a comprehensive public consultation process receiving over 500 submissions via questionnaires and feedback from regional and sectoral meetings. A report on this consultation was advanced in 2003 for presentation to the Minister.

Policy Reviews

In line with the Boards statutory responsibility to advise the Minister on policy, the CFB undertook a number of policy reviews as set out below;

The review of current policy and strategy for the management of pike and pike angling was completed and will be presented to the Minister. It will contribute to the formulation of a national policy and strategy for the management of this important species.

During 2003 a review on the operation of hatcheries was completed and the report was significantly advanced with a view to presentation to the Minister.

Recreational Angling Ireland (RAI)

The Central Board and the National Sports Council have been instrumental in bringing many of the voluntary bodies together to advance a number of strategically important issues relating to angling. The fisheries boards will never have the resources at their disposal to develop angling as it should be developed.

The Central Board is satisfied that the voluntary angling sector has the potential to make a huge contribution in the development of angling.

This new independent group called Recreational Angling Ireland, chaired by Dr. Peter Wilson has developed a Business Plan, which is concentrating on the development of youth angling as a first step.

The group had some notable successes in 2003 where a total of 26 young anglers were coached by expert instructors at two locations. The plan is to hold 8 similar events in 2004.

Title Research

The Title Research Unit had another successful year. In addition to contracts with Dúchas, Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Donegal, Leitrim and Galway County Councils, the unit completed work on the rivers Blackwater, Slaney, Finn, Moy, Suck, Suir and Rinn and on Loughs Namucka and Kinale.

Fish Farms

The Board's fish farms had another successful year. The farms stocked out 495,000 brown trout and 222,000 rainbow trout to the Regional Boards' managed lakes, to angling club waters and to private angling operations. A total of 2,000 carp at various stages of growth were stocked out to 10 different coarse fisheries. These stockings are a vital component in supporting the Regional Boards and angling industry in developing and promoting angling tourism.

Catchment Management

The Board in collaboration with the Regional Boards undertook a comprehensive review of the pilot catchment management groups currently operating. The process involved meeting the groups, holding workshops with the individual members and monitoring and evaluating their current operations. A report on the review will issue in mid 2004.

Marketing

The Central Fisheries Board in conjunction with the Regional Fisheries Boards and Fáilte Ireland began the process of developing a national marketing strategy for angling in 2003. This major project included 3 elements of angling research of which phase 1 and 2 were completed in 2003 with phase 3 due for completion in 2004. It is anticipated that this research will be a core contribution to the strategy, which will be launched in 2004.

Education/Public Awareness

An education pack and poster were developed during 2003 that will support a national fisheries education programme in primary schools around the country. In support of this, a pioneering education project took place in 2003 in conjunction with Blackrock Education Centre and Dun Laoghaire Institute of Art, Design and Technology. This involved piloting a new online elearning project for both teachers and pupils. The whole programme will be launched with a hardcopy pack and poster in 2004.

Angling

The Irish Angling Update was produced weekly during the angling season with angling reports being supplied from the Regional Fisheries Boards and other tourism angling sources. It is circulated to Tourism Ireland offices worldwide, Irish and Foreign Angling Journalists, Angling Tour Operators and the Tourist Angling Trade in Ireland.

The CFB took part in a number of trade shows at home and abroad during 2003. These included the National Angling Show in Swords as well as events in conjunction with Tourism Ireland in the UK, Europe and the US.

Sea Angling

The 2003 angling season was one of the better years with long, settled weather conditions resulting in some positive results especially in the prime angling months of August and September. The predominant species was pollack which were numerous and of above average size. Logbook returns show that cod are down by 50% particularly on the South coast. Haddock showed a marked increase making up for the shortfall of cod. In general, few days were lost to the weather and most charter operators were satisfied with the season.

Shore fishing was generally quiet, with codling virtually "missing" from the East Coast beaches and large flounder also notable by their absence in the estuaries where they were previously found. No specimen flounder was recorded in 2003.

Sea Angling Logbook Statistics (1978-2003)

The number of charter skippers who completed an angling logbook in 2003 was 104, an increase of two on the previous year.

Marine Sport Fish Programme

Over 68 charter skippers and a few dedicated anglers took part in the 2003 Marine Sport Fish Tagging Programme. Over 1,000 fish were tagged and released including blue shark, tope, monkfish, common skate and ray. Since 1970, 35,527 fish have been tagged and released, including 17,329 blue shark. The programme is now the second largest national Marine Sport Fish Tagging scheme in the world after the US.

Promotion:

The CFB Angling Unit organised journalist visits to the Beara Peninsula, Killybegs, Rosses Point, Lough Swilly and Kilmore Quay. Some 10 full colour articles have appeared in the international angling press in UK and Holland as a result of this.

Coarse Angling Report

Roach and hybrid catches were the main fish reported in catches recorded in most angling centres around Ireland. The international angling festivals showed a small increase in the number of visitors although there was a slight decrease in the numbers attending the British King of Clubs Festival in Cavan lakelands. There were some memorable specimen perch recorded on the River Barrow along with specimen hybrids, dace and bream. Ballyhoe and some of the Clare lakes produced most of the specimen tench.

Pike anglers had a good year with plenty of big fish reported all around the country. The bulk of the recorded specimens were taken on the Rivers Suck and Inny while Lough Beg and Lough Erne in the north produced the heaviest lake specimens. Pike angling also continues to grow in popularity with Irish anglers.

Game Angling

Adverse weather conditions and a scarcity of all species of fish were two of the principal features of the 2003 season.

Spring salmon fishing opened on 1st January and the majority of fisheries reported disappointing – even poor fishing. This was in part contributed to by an extended period of low water conditions in March-April when the peak of the run was expected.

Grilse fishing was apparently influenced by two factors, namely a shortage of fish and unseasonably hot weather and low water.

Sea Trout

The decline in sea-trout stocks in the traditional tourist frequented fisheries of the north, northwest, west and southwest continued. Many are in crisis and some have closed down to all angling.

Brown Trout Loughs

Loughs Corrib and Mask performed best of the big brown trout Loughs. However, the Mayfly season, which sees the greatest number of anglers take to the water, was marred by heavy rain, rising water and severely interrupted fly hatches. The remainder of the “developed” brown trout Loughs were disappointing in their performance.

Brown Trout Rivers

Many of the renowned rivers were adversely affected by high water at the peak of the season. Anglers also complained of declining fly hatches – possibly due to deteriorating environmental conditions.

Research

The 2003 Research Programme as set out in our Business Plan was delivered in full. The Business Plan included the provision of an agreed national research programme for the Regional Fisheries Boards reflecting their agreed priorities for 2003.

National Inland Fisheries Research, Development & Advisory Service

A collaborative project, funded under the Tourism and Recreational Angling Measure of the National Development Plan (2000-2006), to determine the extent of the freshwater salmon habitat asset in Ireland using GIS was completed in 2003. A total of 261 discrete migratory salmonid 'Fishery Systems' were identified nationally, of which 173 are recorded as being 'salmon and sea trout' and 88 as being 'sea trout only'. The project estimated total wetted area of river and stream habitat in Ireland to be 182.4 million m² of which 131.2 million m² can be utilised by salmon and sea trout. The outputs of this important study, in conjunction with other data, are currently being used by the National Salmon Commission and its Standing Scientific Committee to set salmon conservation limits for Irish salmon rivers.

River enhancement programmes were designed for channel reaches in Counties Cork, Dublin, Kildare, Kerry, Kilkenny, Louth and Offaly.

A workshop for the staffs of the West Coast Scottish Fisheries Trusts was provided in relation to salmonid river enhancement techniques.

The Board assisted the Loughs Agency in relation to designing salmonid river enhancement programmes for channels in the Foyle Catchment and provided guidance for their staff in relation to implementing such programmes.

A baseline survey of the Ballisodare Catchment was completed and used to generate a fishery management programme for this resource.

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

National Fish Stock Assessment Programme

Year 1 of an EU funded sea trout research programme – ‘Sustainable Management of Interaction between Aquaculture and Wild Salmonid Fish’ – was completed in 2003, in collaboration with the WRFB.

Under the National Sea Trout /Sea Lice Monitoring Programme, sampling was carried out on 15 rivers along the south, west and north-west coasts as in recent years. Highest mean intensity of sea lice was recorded from sea trout in rivers discharging into Killary Harbour, Lough Swilly, Donegal Bay and Kilkieran Bay. As documented previously, rivers where high sea lice levels were recorded on sea trout were in close proximity to marine salmon farms.

A survey of fish stocks, primarily juvenile salmon, was conducted on the Slaney River, one of Ireland’s prime multi-sea-winter salmon fisheries, as part of an ongoing monitoring exercise which has been carried out regularly since the early 1990s with the ERFB.

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

The preparation of a book/training manual on the restoration of salmonid river channels in Ireland continues with an expected publication date in 2005.

Fish stock surveys were carried out on Loughs Sheelin, Arrow and Dromore.

Fish stock and habitat surveys were conducted on sections of the River Shannon on behalf of Waterways Ireland and the Shannon Regional Fisheries Board.

Water Framework Directive

The Board continues active participation on the WFD national co-ordination group, River Basin District steering committees and technical working groups to advance delivery of essential elements within the tight schedules required to meet mandatory deliverables for the WFD in 2004.

The final report of an EPA funded study for the WFD – Hydromorphology of Irish rivers - to devise a methodology to assess morphological conditions in Irish rivers, was drafted in 2003.

The CFB continued delivery of the national requirements of the Water Framework Directive in regard to fish in transitional waters. Staff from the Research, Sea Angling and Protection areas within CFB and staff from the local SWRFB surveyed Castlemaine and Dingle Harbours, Co. Kerry. In addition to the main estuary, the lower reaches of the Caragh, Behy, Laune and Maine rivers were investigated.

National Fisheries Environment and Biodiversity Programme

A survey of Lough Leane in 2003, for the National Parks and Wildlife Service, shows that the lake supports a good population of Killarney Shad (*Alosa fallax killarnensis*), a unique sub-species. It is a designated species (EU Habitats Directive, Annex II) fish, which occurs only in the Killarney Lakes. Maintenance of the favourable conservation status of this unique shad is an obligation under the Directive.

A four-year programme of research and rehabilitation on the Owenmore Catchment was agreed between Bord Na Mona, NWRFB and CFB. The effects of desilting long sections of the Owenmore and its tributary streams will be scientifically monitored, beginning in 2004.

The progress of a number of invasive alien aquatic plant species in Irish watercourses was monitored.

Long term monitoring of the key water quality indicators continued on 14 lakes during 2003; a further 4900 water samples, from rivers and lakes, were analysed for nutrients (N & P) and other important chemical properties.

Fieldwork concluded for the EPA ERTDI project, conducted jointly with University partners (UU, UCD, UCC, & NUIG) to research the possible use of fish as indicators of biological quality in rivers (in preparation for the Water Framework Directive). Material is currently being processed for the final report.

The catalogue of fish kills has been updated to Dec 2003. A total of 72 fish kill incidents, investigated by the Regional Fisheries Boards, were attributed to the following categories; Agriculture 9, Industry 6, Local Authorities 5, Eutrophication 11, Other 36 (31 due to acid mine leachate in the Avoca river) and Unknown 5 (possible cause could not be established).

Research on the impacts of drainage maintenance on aquatic vegetation, coarse fish, protected fish species (Habitats Directive, Annex II) and on management of marginal tree cover continued in 2003. Survey work was carried in a number of OPW catchments with the assistance of the Regional Fisheries Boards.

A training programme on environmentally sensitive drainage maintenance, developed by CFB with RFB assistance was completed by mid-February; it was attended by 250 OPW staff at 14 centres. During 2003, 25% of the OPW machine fleet was visited on-site as a follow-up.

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

A major study, to establish a baseline on the status of shad and lamprey, was undertaken within the designated SAC waters on the catchments of the Slaney and the Munster Blackwater. This study, funded by National Parks and Wildlife Service of DEHLG, was carried out with the assistance of the Eastern and Southern Regional Fisheries Boards.

The study, funded by the OPW, on part of the R. Nore (Kilkenny City) Flood Relief, continued in 2003. A baseline on juvenile lamprey populations was established in sections of the R. Nore main channel and selected tributaries outside the area of the flood scheme.

The CFB/SRFB confirmed the presence of sexually mature smelt in pre-spawning condition, on the R. Suir in spring 2003, but spawning was not observed.

THE CENTRAL FISHERIES BOARD

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2003

	Notes	2003		2002	
		€	€	€	€
Income					
State and EU Funding					
Operating Grants	1	5,119,386		6,607,394	
Less: Allocated to Regional Fisheries Boards		<u>759,747</u>	<u>4,359,639</u>	1,415,276	5,192,118
Other Income	2	1,379,953		1,174,443	
Less: Allocated to Regional Fisheries Boards		<u>-</u>	1,379,953	<u>-</u>	1,174,443
Transfer from / (to) Capital Account	11		<u>(17,272)</u>		<u>845,746</u>
			<u>5,722,319</u>		<u>7,212,307</u>
Expenditure					
Administration	3		2,082,316		2,881,172
Operations	4		<u>3,674,020</u>		<u>4,161,999</u>
			<u>5,756,336</u>		<u>7,043,171</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year			(34,016)		169,136
Surplus at 1 January			<u>111,886</u>		<u>(57,250)</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 December			<u>77,870</u>		<u>111,886</u>

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

Regional Fisheries Boards

Eastern Regional Fisheries Board

General

The Board had a successful year in 2003 and continued to make progress on developing conserving, promoting and managing the Region's fisheries. The year was characterised by very low rainfall, a record number of sunshine hours and relatively high temperatures.

Fisheries Management and Conservation

Electro fishing works were carried out on many of the Region's rivers and in total fish stocks were monitored on more than 25 rivers in the Region. There was a significant drop in spawning levels on the Slaney, whilst they were reported good on the rivers Rye and Boyne. The high water levels made conditions difficult to ascertain exact spawning levels.

Instream and spawning enhancement works took place on 5 rivers in the Region in 2003, with a total investment of €53,636. Over 12.5km of rivers and streams were developed and this included works on the Liffey, Boro, Slaney, Fane, Dee, Glyde and the Boyne tributaries. This includes the granting of €37,000 under the Peace and Reconciliation fund for a two year cross border enhancement works programme on the River Fane.

The Board improved a number of its fisheries and provided ancillary services for a number of angling venues. In total 11 angling facility enhancement projects took place with a total investment of €32,728, creating 44 additional angling spaces. Specific projects included disabled angling access facilities in Counties Cavan and Monaghan, fishery works on the River Boyne at Oldbridge and on the River Liffey. Structures were maintained and replaced throughout the Region where necessary.

15 sea patrols, 36 inland boat patrols and 24 aerial patrols were carried out in 2003. In line with recent trends there was a much reduced level of illegal activity at sea. Most incidences were in relation to anglers in breach of coarse fish byelaws.

Environmental Management and Control

The slowing of Ireland's economic growth in 2003 continued, with a slight decrease in infrastructural development compared to previous years. Many flood relief works on the Region's rivers were monitored during the year and plans were drawn up for some rivers in the Dublin area. Over 700 fish were salvaged from streams affected by motorway/housing development and by flood relief works in the Dublin area.

In line with a slight decrease in housing and motorway developments in 2002, 526 inspections were made in the Region relating to specific planning applications and a number were made relating to IPC licences and the Waste Management Act. 636 reports of an environmental nature were received at the Boards offices and investigated during 2003. 45 fish kill incidences occurred, 31 of which were on the Avoca river.

Safety, Health and Welfare at work

Safety continued to be of paramount importance within the Board. Two staff commenced the Fishery Management Diploma course in the Sligo Regional Technical College. There was a heavy emphasis in the Board on PMDS Training for all staff in 2003, which included training in phases 1 & 2.

Catchment Management

The catchment management process continued on the Avoca in earnest in 2003 with the publication of a report by the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne entitled '*Restoring the Avoca River – An integrated social/technical scoping study of acid mine drainage remediation options*'.

The findings from this report indicate that with assistance from international experts and financial investment, the most polluted river in Ireland could be restored to one of the most prolific salmon rivers in the country. The proposed solution is to construct an active treatment plant, which would treat the acid mine drainage discharges. The estimated cost of such could be up to €3,600,000. This report was released and distributed to all stakeholders and resulted in wide media coverage and good support for the plan.

Marketing and Promotion of Angling

2003 saw the completion of a suite of brochures from the Eastern Region funded by the Tourism and Recreational Angling Measure. A sea angling guide entitled 'Sea Angling along the East Coast' was produced and a brochure entitled 'Fishing in the South East' was launched by the Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Mr. John Browne, T.D.

The Board attended 13 successful angling promotions at home and abroad in 2003. Press and media coverage during the year was very successful with a total of 67 items of coverage including editorial coverage in a number of overseas publications. These elements resulted in firm bookings and generated considerable interest in tourism angling in the Region.

The Board's website increased in popularity with over 15,000 unique users who viewed more than 60,000 pages. The site remains in the top ten of the major search engines on the Internet. Commercialisation of the website was initiated with €2,000 sponsorship from SIXT Irish Car Rental company secured.

The Dublin Angling Initiative continued its work in the Greater Dublin area and succeeded in introducing angling as a recreational activity to almost 700 young people. New fishing clubs were also set up and its educational programme expanded into more schools in Dublin as well as the Wexford and Dundalk Districts.

Board Fisheries

There was a decline in the number of permits issued on Board Fisheries during the year. There were approximately 5,196 rod days on the Board's waters this year with €3,712 revenue created. 2,300 brown trout and rainbows were released into Emy and Bracken Lakes during the angling season.

The Eastern Fisheries Development Society met 7 times in 2003. The Society received applications for grant in aid from 7 angling clubs and associations. Grant in aid totalling €2,800 was allocated to the society and €1,100 was allocated to clubs in grant aid.

Commercial Fisheries

In relation to commercial fishing, the total allowable catch (TAC) for the Region for salmon and sea trout in 2003 was 8,091. The total reported commercial catch for the year was 3,339. This represents a slight decrease in the reported catch of 12% from 2002, when the total reported catch was 3,791. However, since 2001 there has been an overall decrease of 50% when the total reported catch was 6,076.

Aquaculture

Aquaculture continues to be carried out in parts of the region, particularly Dundalk Bay and Wicklow and Wexford on the South East coast. A glass eel survey initiated in 2001 continued this year on the Boyne estuary

THE EASTERN REGIONAL FISHERIES BOARD

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2003

	Notes	2003 €	2002 €
Income			
Oireachtas Income	1	1,854,389	2,286,528
Other Income	2	285,730	248,210
		<u>2,140,119</u>	<u>2,534,738</u>
Transfer from / (to) Capital Account	11	49,295	26,732
		<u>2,189,414</u>	<u>2,561,470</u>
Expenditure			
Administration	3	544,574	717,150
Operations	4	1,692,694	1,815,396
		<u>2,237,268</u>	<u>2,532,546</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		(47,854)	28,924
Surplus at 1 January		<u>102,240</u>	<u>73,316</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 December		<u><u>54,386</u></u>	<u><u>102,240</u></u>

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

Southern Regional Fisheries Board

The year 2003 proved a difficult year for the Board and the staff in terms of inadequacy of resources. The Business Plan targets were achieved but had additional resources been available there would have undoubtedly been much more work on the development and promotional fronts.

Corporate Governance

During the 2003 period Deloitte and Touche performed a gap analysis for the Board in order to specify the exact requirements under Corporate Governance.

The Board has delivered on its Management and Financial Reporting requirements and an Audit Committee was set up during the year.

The SRFB Co-operative has continued to do trojan work in the region, however, in a period of decreasing funds the future system is being examined.

Licence income for the Region reached €155,000 for the period,

Freedom of information Requests were dealt with in accordance with the regulations and staff received training in reviewing.

Fisheries Management & Conservation

The Board successfully implemented the 2003 Tags and Quotas regulations. However, Rod angler logbook returns remain poor, reaching approximately 55%.

Counters – The Clondulane counter was damaged by lightning and was out of action for a considerable portion of the year. The Suir Counter is operating and the Blackwater counter remains inoperable.

Smolt Tagging: The Board, with the help of the Marine Institute and the NRFB commissioned and operated a smolt trap on the river Suir.

Habitat Restoration: After thirteen years of work the Board succeeded in breaching the Portlaw Weir on the River Clodiagh.

Environmental Management & Control

Again in this area the Board recognises the excellent work undertaken this year by the environmental staff in providing a comprehensive service in spite of limited resources. Performance in this area consisted of vast numbers of planning application being assessed, forestry consultations, liaison with the EPA, effluent plant inspections and participation in

environmental monitoring committees. along with fish kill investigation and prosecution. The Board also provided a number of REPS training courses in the region.

Water Framework Directive

The Board covers two regions in terms of the WFD; the South East River Basin District (full participation ongoing) and the Southern River Basin District (Cork County Council designated lead authority in December 03, full participation envisaged going forward).

Training

As a result of the PMDS training, needs have been identified in the Board and liaison with CFB in on going.

PMDS - The roll out of PMDS was successful in the SRFB with all staff role profiles and Phase II training awaited.

Staff participated in VHF, Control & Restraint, FOI, Expert Witness and Computer training.

Two staff have commenced the Fisheries Management in course in Sligo.

Catchment Management

The Barrow Steering Group participated and completed a review in the period with the help of CFB. New objectives and a new strategic vision are in place.

Marketing & Promotion

The Board participates and liases with the various tourist bodies in the region.

The Board has printed new brochures of the trout fishing reservoirs of Ballyshunnock & Knockaderry.

Website

During 2003 the Board decided to change the image of its website and to this end training has been provided in website marketing and maintenance. The new website will go live in 2004.

Local & Regional Development

The Board participated in the BMW and the SE regional assemblies.

THE SOUTHERN REGIONAL FISHERIES BOARD

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2003

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2003</u> €	<u>2002</u> €
Income			
Oireachtas Income	1 & 2	1,669,603	1,913,613
Other Income	3	308,570	221,621
		<u>1,978,173</u>	<u>2,135,234</u>
Transfer from / (to) Capital Account	10	65,092	28,100
		<u>2,043,265</u>	<u>2,163,334</u>
Expenditure			
Administration	4	588,348	808,146
Operations	5	1,258,578	1,634,856
		<u>1,846,926</u>	<u>2,443,002</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		196,339	(279,668)
Surplus at 1 January		<u>(303,562)</u>	<u>(23,894)</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 December		<u><u>(107,223)</u></u>	<u><u>(303,562)</u></u>

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

South Western Regional Fisheries Board

The Board had a successful year in 2003 despite the heavy rains that fell in the early part of the year and the extremely dry weather that occurred in the latter part. While these operating conditions, from an angling perspective were challenging, the regions fisheries continued to fish well.

Corporate Governance

Board staff

In 2003 the Board had 30 full time staff and employed 9 temporary staff.

The Board carried out its functions in accordance with, and as laid down by, the 'Ethics in Public Office' directives.

The Boards Audit Committee continued to function efficiently.

Annual Business Plan

The Board successfully achieved the components of its business plan for 2003. While there were many challenges throughout the year, the Board succeeded in delivering its objectives.

The South West Trout & Coarse Development Society held two meetings in 2003 and progressed plans for some development works.

Fisheries Management and Conservation

Aquaculture

The Board continued to keep a watching brief on the regions sea lice monitoring programme, while higher than recommended lice levels were noted on some salmon farms during the year at certain times, compliance was in the main met.

The Board assisted in the Tralee oyster fishery.

Board prosecutions

Through the work of the Boards protection staff a number of prosecutions were initiated and a substantial quantity of illegal fishing equipment was seized in 2003. The new 'On the Spot fines' system is continuing to prove effective.

Cork region

Total nets seized	28 nets
Seizures fish	18 fish
Prosecutions initiated	19 cases
Seizures equipment	11 items

Kerry region

Total nets seized	56 nets
Seizure fish	22 fish
Prosecutions initiated	2 cases
Seizures equipment	1 item

On The Spot Fines (OTSF)

38 OTSF were issued in 2003. 3 prosecutions are pending due to non payment of the fine.

Mobile Protection Unit

The Boards mobile Protection Unit proved to be a considerable deterrent to illegal fishing activities in 2003. The Unit provides a valuable rapid response facility to the Board that greatly assists its protection operations.

National fish counter programme

The following counters operated in the region during the year:

Waterville fishery

Kerry Blackwater

River Laune

River Bandon

The Board noted that the resistivity counters tended to perform better, with less maintenance, than the hydro acoustic counters.

Tags and Quotas

The Tagging programme ran smoothly throughout 2003. Disappointingly there was only a 60% return of angler's logbooks. There was a 100% commercial logbook return.

Environmental Management and Control

Environmental report

Reports Investigated:

The Board received 194 reports of an environmental nature during 2003. These reports ranged from complaints which included the discharge of effluent directly to waters from agriculture, industry and local authority sources, through non-compliance with planning conditions, dumping of materials close to watercourses, run off from road and development sites and physical interference with rivers through drainage and gravel extraction.

The majority of the reports were received from the general public with the remainder being from fishery officers, anglers and Board members.

Prosecutions:

7 prosecutions were initiated as a result of environmental investigations in 2003. Two of these cases have been successfully concluded while five remain to be heard. Two cases related to agricultural discharges, two to instream works, while the remaining three cases were due to local authority sewage discharges.

School Educational Programme:

Clondrohid, Kilnadur, Leap and Ballinacurra National Schools were visited and a total of 140 students addressed.

Awareness Programme:

Presentations were given at REPS courses and to local community development groups, information letters on instream works were issued to riparian owners.

Phosphate awareness campaign

The phosphate awareness campaign initiated in 1998 is ongoing. This issue is now centre stage and being addressed by many different organisations.

Farm Surveys

One survey was undertaken in the Lough Currane catchment, Waterville during the period with 30 farms visited.

Planning

A total of 1066 planning applications were assessed in relation to their potential impact on fisheries with 400 submissions made to the relevant planning authorities. In many instances the Board consulted with developers prior to application for planning, and fishery requirements were included in development design. One appeal was made to an Bord Pleanala during the year.

Fish Kills

4 fish kills were recorded during the year, 3 in County Cork and 1 in Co. Kerry. The most serious incident resulted in excess of 1000 salmon, brown trout and sea trout mortalities with all year classes affected on the River Lee as a result of gill irritation caused by a several factors including high temperatures, low waters and increased algae production.

Water Quality Monitoring

Impact assessment monitoring was undertaken on Lough Allua on a monthly basis and on a quarterly basis in Lough Currane and the Blackwater River.

Licensing

Recommendations were made on applications for Water Pollution Discharge Licence, Waste Permits, Forestry Approval, Aquaculture Licences, and Foreshore Licences. Section 18 Authorisations were also issued.

Training

Board staff attended a number of training courses during the year including first aid and water rescue. Two staff commenced the Fishery Officer training course in the Institute of Technology in Sligo.

PMDS

The Boards 2003 PMDS programme was successfully initiated. Staff stated that they found the process valuable, allowing for additional feedback, which assisted them in the delivery of the Boards Development Plan.

Health and safety

The Board held a number of staff H&S meetings during the year. Comprehensive equipment checks were undertaken to ensure safe operations.

The Board undertook its ongoing remedial works programme on its Board fisheries.

Marketing And Promotion

The Board had a very successful year on the marketing and promotional side producing a number of publications.

Three trade shows were attended in 2003, two in the USA and one in the UK. These shows resulted in a number of firm bookings and generated considerable interest.

Several promotional articles were written for various publications.

Board Fisheries

Coarse Angling - Inniscarra Lake

Inniscarra Lake, managed jointly by the ESB and the SWRFB, had a very successful year and indications are that visiting tourist numbers are on the increase.

There were several angling competitions held on the lake during the year and by all accounts these had very successful returns.

Managed Trout Lakes

The Boards 13 managed Rainbow trout lakes had a good year in spite of the weather. Approximately 50,000 Rainbow trout were stocked into the lakes. Permit revenue amounted to

€92,130. The Creel Census forms indicated that people enjoyed fishing the lakes; especially from a family aspect and that a number of fish were caught weighing over 14 lb. The mobile protection unit was a great help in monitoring and checking for permits.

The Jack Charlton Cup proved to be once again a successful event.

Special Projects

European initiatives

The Board was actively involved in three INTERREG programmes, two at a bidding stage and one at the implementation stage. The latter programme (The Salmon Tour) held a conference in Killarney with partners attending from Wales, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Spain.

THE SOUTH WESTERN REGIONAL FISHERIES BOARD

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2003

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2003</u> €	<u>2002</u> €
Income			
Oireachtas Income		2,051,125	1,847,040
Other Income	1	<u>401,495</u>	<u>345,488</u>
		2,452,620	2,192,528
Transfer from / (to) Capital Account			
	8	<u>66,068</u>	<u>68,087</u>
		2,518,688	2,260,615
Expenditure			
Administration	2	687,544	624,089
Operations	3	<u>1,796,878</u>	<u>1,640,463</u>
		2,484,422	2,264,552
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		34,266	(3,937)
Surplus at 1 January		<u>13,459</u>	<u>16,681</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 December		<u><u>47,725</u></u>	<u><u>12,744</u></u>

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

Shannon Regional Fisheries Board

General

Building on the work of previous years, the Board implemented its remit to protect, develop and promote the fisheries of the Shannon Region during 2003 through the rolling out of the Board's Strategic Statement and Development Plan 2003- 2006. The Business Plans, which stem from the Strategic Statement, were successfully completed and advanced the conservation and development of the Regions fisheries, within resource constraints.

The Board embraced fully the Governments Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and substantial progress was made on its implementation. This focus on good governance and value for money ran alongside the continued modernisation of the service, and the involvement of staff in this process was wholehearted with active involvement in training, flexibility and the delivery of Business Plans in all areas.

The successful delivery of our business programs, which ranged from Fisheries environmental services through promotion and marketing, to the enforcement of fisheries regulations, must be and were shown to be flexible enough to take account of major unforeseen incidents such as the Landslide at Derrybrien, Co Galway, which impacted on 22 kilometers of river.

Fisheries Environmental Services

The Board's Strategic Statement has identified the protection and improvement of water quality and the fish habitat as their key objective over the coming years. Despite the lack of resources in this area, the Board through staff flexibility utilised its available resources to tackle this increasing area. Preventing habitat loss in our streams and rivers through culverting, nursery loss by the drainage of our lakes and streams, the clogging up of our rivers and streams through peat harvesting and declining fish populations through water quality degradation, are some of the issues dealt with.

In dealing with these issues the Board undertook education and awareness sessions to bring about a change in attitudes by those impacting on the fisheries environment. The Board also initiated 27 prosecutions for breaches of the water quality legislation. Working with other bodies, the Local Authorities, the EPA and also participating in the newly established Shannon River District Basin Management Group, the Board sought to heighten the awareness of the damage being done to our fisheries and sought action for the restoration of our fisheries.

Apart from the traditional problems of Local Authority and Agricultural pollution, the Board faces increasing problems from the construction of new roads and pipelines and other infra-structural projects. One such infrastructure project saw major fishery environmental damage caused by a peat landslide at Derrybrien, Co. Galway during the construction of a wind farm in which 22 km of river were adversely impacted upon.

Despite action by many agencies, water and habitat damage in the Shannon Region continues to be the single major threat to the conservation and development of our fisheries.

Fisheries Enforcement

Ensuring compliance with Fisheries Regulations for all fish and their habitats is a key objective of the Board and was the focus of a number of programmes during 2003. Seeking adherence to Salmon conservation measures continued to be the main focus of the Board's activities in this area. Activities to protect other species and their habitats were increased. Staff throughout the Region was responsible for initiating 8 prosecutions for breaches of fisheries regulations and seizing 1725 meters of net. 1,280 man hrs of sea and estuary patrols were undertaken and 180 Shannon cruisers were checked for breaches of coarse bye laws.

The implementation of the Salmon Tagging and Quota Programme continued to receive high priority. This resulted in good compliance and the provision of valuable information by which stocks can be managed in a more comprehensive manner. The reduction in the commercial quota led to greater questioning of the future for Drift and Draft net fisheries. Indeed, in light of the CFB's Wetted Area Report and the likelihood of further reductions in the Regions salmon quota, systems need to be put in place to ensure equitable and transparent division of the available salmon resource, which respect fishing traditions and the need to catch salmon on a commercial basis within a sustainable stock.

The Board continues to work with the ESB to bring about improvements in the delivery of its mandate on the protection of fisheries in the Shannon catchment.

Fisheries Enhancement

The Board continued to act as a facilitator and promoter for fishery habitat enhancement, advising Angling Clubs, Local Authorities, and Development Groups on sustainable development programmes and providing physical assistance where practical. One such major programme was that of the Hind River, Co. Roscommon, Phase 1 of which was completed during the year in conjunction with the Roscommon County Council, the Lough Ree Angling Groups, ESB, Shannon Fisheries Board and part funded by the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

The Board's fisheries management information was further enhanced by the successful completion of stock assessment surveys, in conjunction with the Central Fisheries Board, on Lough Sheelin and sections of the main Shannon. Fish surveys carried out by private Consultants under Authorisation from the Board and the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources were also made available to the Board.

As part of the ESB's remit to enhance fish stocks impacted upon by the electricity Hydro Plant at Ardnacrusha and to assist in redressing the declining wild eel stocks, the Board participated in a

glass eel and elver harvesting and restocking programme which saw over 1616 kg. of juvenile eels transferred upstream in the Shannon Catchment.

Following two years of work and with assistance from a wide range of people including Local land owners, the Irish Wheelchair Association and Roscommon County Council, a major “*access-for-all*” fishery was opened by Minister for State Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Mr. John Browne. This development was the first of its type on a wild fishery and can cater for 30 disabled anglers.

Promotion of Fisheries

The increasing pressure on our fisheries habitat and the increasing development of angling amenities abroad continues to impact adversely on the promotion of Irish angling. To counter this and to stabilise our share of the market the Board undertook an advertising campaign in the angling press, attended a number of trade fairs abroad and worked with tourist and angling groups to run course angling competitions in the Region which attracted over 600 European anglers.

The Board continued to develop its successful web site *www.shannon-fishery-board.ie*, which received over 570,214 hits during 2003. The development of the first on line service for the sale of salmon angling Licences and the Boards angling Permits was successful and complemented the sites weekly angling updates which attracts a wide readership. The site attracted hits from 51 countries with Europe predominating.

Organisation Support

Staff development and service delivery is a high priority for the Board. The role out of PMDS saw the successful completion of Phases 1 & 2 of the training programme. Training programmes to develop a wide range of skills were undertaken, accounting for 487 man-days of skill development.

Issues of Health and safety were addressed by the Health and safety Committee that met regularly throughout the year. Risk assessments of all Board premises were undertaken and addressed. Initiatives to increase safety awareness in the workplace were undertaken.

Co-Ops

The Board has two Trout and Coarse Fisheries Development Societies which operating within the Shannon Region, namely the Upper Shannon Trout and Coarse Fisheries Development Society and the Lower Shannon Trout and Coarse Fisheries Development Society.

Both Societies were active during 2003, meeting on a number of occasions to review proposals for funding and providing grant aid to selected projects. The Lower Shannon Society supported 9 fisheries projects.

The Board disbursed requested grant aid of €8,704 to the Upper Shannon Development Society and €28,828 to the Lower Shannon Development Society for works completed in 2002.

Corporate Governance

The Chairman Mr. Michael Callaghan, in his annual report to the Minister confirmed that the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies had been adopted by the Board at its March 2003 meeting. He further confirmed the Boards intention to be in full compliance with the Code as soon as is practicable.

During the year Comptroller and Auditor General completed the audit of the 2002 Financial Statement of the Board. The audit certificate was issued by the Comptroller and Auditor General on 20th December 2003. The Board complied with the requirements of the Fisheries (Amendment) Act 1999, which provides for accounts preparation and statutory audit in a timely manner.

Freedom of Information

During 2003 the Board received four requests for information under FOI. All four requests were granted and information released in accordance with the FOI legislation.

Ethics in Public Office

The Board complied with all requirements under the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995. All designated directors (Board members) and designated employees completed their requirements on the declaration of interests.

THE SHANNON REGIONAL FISHERIES BOARD

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2003

	Notes	2003 €	2002 €
Income			
Oireachtas Income	1	2,422,462	2,664,688
Other Income	3	403,519	297,411
		<u>2,825,981</u>	<u>2,962,099</u>
Transfer from / (to) Capital Account	12	40,843	(49,493)
		<u>2,866,824</u>	<u>2,912,606</u>
Expenditure			
Administration	4	719,352	798,577
Operations	5	2,038,307	2,201,610
		<u>2,757,659</u>	<u>3,000,187</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		109,165	(87,581)
Surplus at 1 January		<u>52,717</u>	<u>140,298</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 December		<u>161,882</u>	<u>52,717</u>

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

Notable Achievements in 2003

- Loughs Corrib & Mask had excellent wild brown trout fishing seasons.
- Salmon tags and quota system effectively operated and managed.
- Laboratory re-instated following fire.
- Farm surveys in Robe catchment undertaken.
- Investment in GIS technology.
- New regional game angling guide published.
- Commenced SUMBAWS project in conjunction with the CFB.
- Two staff participated on new Certificate in Fisheries management course in Sligo.
- Ranching operations continued in Bunowen and Corrib.
- Enhancement operations in Erriff and Corrib continued.
- Recovery in salmon catches on Galway Fishery.
- Angling reports/photographs published in numerous newspapers and magazines.
- Thousands of angling enquiries answered.
- Angling promoted and marketed abroad.
- The Western Fisheries Cooperative Society completed a programme of works for 2003.

Staff

During the year two staff members retired on ill health. This is becoming increasingly common with a workforce whose age profile is so high. Approval for the replacement of the retired staff was granted and following an open competition a fishery officer was recruited for the Ballinakill district. As several staff also reached retirement age the recruitment process was activated to replace them.

Despite efforts to get approval for the replacement of the C.E.O., approval has not been given for the filling of that particular position.

Protection and Development

A very significant effort was made to ensure that fish were protected. These efforts were focused on salmonids including salmon, sea trout and brown trout. Staff were deployed counting redds, improving river habitat, rescuing fish in low water, stock management in key wild brown trout fisheries, implementing the salmon carcass tagging and quota scheme patrolling rivers, estuaries and the sea undertaking sea lice inspections and stripping fish for enhancement and ranching purposes.

Over the year 61 illegal nets were seized.

The pilot initiative in the Robe catchment was progressed and under the guidance of the group a rehabilitation project was undertaken with financial support from the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources as well as the Carra Mask Angling Federation.

A further lake and stream development project was also undertaken in the Cornamona area and on Ballydoolough with financial assistance from the Cornamona Anglers.

Aquaculture

The Board continued to monitor sea lice on salmon farms in conjunction with the Marine Institute. In addition, Board staff in conjunction with staff of Galway County Council made a grim discovery of large numbers of farmed salmon buried in a bog in Connemara. The Board remains deeply concerned that the problems in the aquaculture industry are not being properly addressed and that there is no enforcement of the legislation, particularly where breaches in licence conditions occur. Furthermore there were massive mortalities in the salmon farms in the region during the year, which is also a cause of grave concern.

The Board was alarmed by an outbreak of I.P.N. in a hatchery in south Connemara and subsequently in the site to which these fish were transferred in outer Galway Bay. The Board continues to call for the quarantining and if necessary culling of diseased stock in instances where diseases, new to the area, are identified.

The Joint Oireachtas Committee for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources held a meeting in Dublin following concerns about the certain practices which were highlighted on a "Prime-Time" national TV programme. The Board attended this meeting and was afforded the opportunity to relay its concerns. It is anticipated that a further follow up meeting will take place in 2004.

Aquatic Environment

During the early part of the year weather conditions were generally favourable for fish life but sunny weather, low rainfall, followed by near drought conditions in August put pressure on fish stocks.

The Board undertook a number of electro-fishing surveys of fish populations most notably on the Dunkellin River.

The Board continued to operate automatic samplers on the Clare and Robe rivers.

A total of 610 environmental incidents and complaints were logged during the year.

The operation of the Board's laboratory was suspended early in the year following an electrical fire. However, by the year's end the laboratory had been completely refurbished and re-commissioned.

Farmyard surveys were undertaken in the Robe catchment and a number of problematic farms identified.

The Board noted an exceptional number of oil spillages over the year – 5 in total 3 of which were in the Corrib catchment. Furthermore algal blooms were noted on 5 lakes including Loughs Carra and Corrib.

Hatchery

The Board's hatchery at Cong continued to produce smolts for ranching operations on the Bunowen and the Corrib. In addition, a significant number of smolts were raised for the SUMBAWS project. These fish were released in the Gowla and Invermore systems in Connemara.

FAS Programmes

The Board continued with its FAS schemes and during the period two staff members were dedicated to the supervision of FAS schemes on a full time basis. The schemes operated in Louisburgh and Oughterard. Considerable work was done on Board facilities in Moycullen and Greenfields as well as in the area around Louisburgh and Westport particularly on the Bunowen and Erriff rivers and around Aasleagh Lodge.

Angling information / promotion / sea angling

The Board continued with the development of its web site and significantly upgraded it over the year. In addition Board staff answered a diverse number of angler enquiries over the period both from the Head Office in Galway but also from the regional stores and bases around the Region. In excess of 6,000 angler enquiries were catered for in 2003. In addition a comprehensive weekly angling update was prepared and circulated widely to newspapers and angling journals. 135 angling reports were published and in the region of 100 photographs published. Board staff assisted overseas angling journalists and TV researchers. Angling articles and photographs were published in angling magazines.

Commercial Catches – Salmon / Eels / Molluscs

Commercial salmon trapping in the Galway Fishery remained suspended in 2003. The commercial drift net salmon catch for the Ballinakill District was reduced significantly through the quota system. There was a significant change also where the fish were caught, the draft nets having a much better year. The combined quota in both Galway and Connemara would be just more than the quota for Ballinakill. In most cases the quota was just about filled with just a few tags remaining.

Anglers were also curtailed to 20 salmon in a season but no more than one fish per day up to the 1st June.

Erriff Fishery, Aasleagh Lodge and the Galway Fishery

Bookings at the Erriff Fishery and Aasleagh Lodge were significantly up for the season, however, due to the very fine weather in the summer the catch on the Erriff was down considerably on the previous year from 508 to just 292. Sea trout catches were even more disappointing with just 142 being recorded on the fishery - this was the third year in a row when the sea trout catches

continued to decline. Furthermore, sea trout with high lice levels were taken in the lower reaches of both the Erriff and Delphi fisheries in the summer of 2003.

The Galway Fishery had a much improved season on 2002 and in total 434 salmon were landed. Furthermore the eel fishery performed well in the autumn, this was primarily due to a significant improvement in prices over those achieved in 2002.

Bunowen River

Unfortunately, the weather conditions were unsuitable over a long period with low water levels for much of August and September. However, the salmon fishing performed quite well with no less than over 120 salmon caught. Several spring salmon were caught, the best of 17 lb.

THE WESTERN REGIONAL FISHERIES BOARD

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2003

	<u>Notes</u>	<u>2003</u> €	<u>2002</u> €
Income			
Oireachtas Income	1	2,609,353	2,687,663
Other Income	3	<u>1,211,687</u>	<u>991,216</u>
		3,821,040	3,678,879
Transfer from / (to) Capital Account			
	12	<u>(443)</u>	<u>24,078</u>
		3,820,597	3,702,957
Expenditure			
Administration	4	904,820	855,076
Operations	5	<u>2,908,640</u>	<u>2,844,181</u>
		3,813,460	3,699,257
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		7,137	3,700
Surplus at 1 January		<u>62,328</u>	<u>58,628</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 December		<u><u>69,465</u></u>	<u><u>62,328</u></u>

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

North Western Regional Fisheries Board

General

- A Fisheries Catchment Management Plan entitled “*Towards a New Era for the Owenmore*” was agreed and published for the Owenmore River system.
- The Board managed fish counter on the Munhin River, the outflow from Carrowmore Lake, operated throughout 2003 and a full count was obtained.
- Water quality continued to be of serious concern to the Board and heavy emphasis was again placed on protection and restoration of water quality.
- Particular emphasis was also placed on the promotion of juvenile and ladies angling and a number of very successful events were organised.
- A total of 6,209 rod days were fished on Board managed fisheries and tourist anglers came to the region from at least 28 countries.
- The Moy Fishery had its best year ever and accommodated 4,219 anglers.
- The Board’s website went online in March and had received 10,708 visits and 173,259 “hits” by year-end.
- The Board operated within budget and made significant progress in relation to the modernisation of its corporate governance and management systems.
- The North Western Trout & Coarse Fisheries Development Society has held only one meeting to discuss future plans.

The Region’s Fisheries

Salmon angling was generally poor throughout most of the region but this could be attributed largely to the low water levels, which prevailed throughout much of the summer. The total reported rod and line catch amounted to 8,718 salmon.

Brown trout fishing improved on Lough Conn in 2003 and anglers reported 2,417 fish. Some good fishing was also reported from Lough Cullin during the Mayfly season. On Lough Arrow, the season was again very disappointing. The Moy estuary had one of its best sea trout seasons for several years with a reported catch of approximately 3,500 sea trout.

The Board managed rainbow trout fisheries at Ballin Lough and Lough Nasool were both fished very heavily particularly during the early part of the season. Ballin Lough, in particular, fished well and produced a total of 1,007 trout.

Protection of Water Quality

In general, there was no sign of a reversal of the eutrophication problem, which has been evident for some years on major lakes as a result of phosphorous enrichment.

Three fish kills occurred during the year, including one very serious kill on the Upper Moy in which several thousand trout and juvenile salmon died.

The Board's annual farm survey programme continued and 460 farms were visited throughout the region.

Catchment Management

In accordance with the policy set out in its Strategic Development Plan 2002-2006, the Board continued to move towards a catchment based approach to management of the major river systems in the region. A fisheries catchment management plan for the Owenmore river system, entitled "*Towards a New Era for the Owenmore*" was agreed by the Owenmore catchment management committee, adopted by Board and published.

Promotion and Marketing of Angling

Despite a reduced budget, the Board continued to actively promote and market the region's fisheries. The Board's website went online in March 2003 and, by year-end, the site had received 10,708 visits and 173,259 "hits". Analysis of salmon angling licence sales indicated that tourist anglers visited the region from at least 28 countries.

Protection and Conservation of Fisheries

All salmon bearing inland waters were patrolled as necessary throughout the year and the coastal area was patrolled regularly during the period May-September when salmon were running. Board staff also manned the national patrol vessel, Cosantoir Bradán, and participated in two aerial patrols. The region's oyster fisheries at Belmullet, Clew Bay and Achill were also patrolled.

Twenty-nine illegal nets were seized, measuring 6,505 yards. Prosecutions were initiated in five cases and six on-the-spot fines were issued and paid. The salmon tagging & quotas regulations were implemented and Board staff reported a high level of compliance among commercial salmon fishermen with both the tagging scheme and the operation of quotas.

Management of Board Fisheries

A total of 6,209 rod days were fished on Board managed fisheries and The Moy Fishery enjoyed its best year ever and accommodated 4,219 anglers from 21 countries.

Commercial Fisheries

Commercial salmon catches were generally disappointing. Despite a significant reduction in the total allowable catch, licensed fishermen in the region did not succeed in catching the quota allocated in any of the three districts. The total commercial catch, at 32,552, was one of the lowest on record.

The oyster fisheries at Clew Bay and Belmullet returned catches of 3 tonnes and 53 tonnes respectively.

THE NORTH WESTERN REGIONAL FISHERIES BOARD

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2003

	Notes	2003 €	2002 €
Income			
Oireachtas Income	1 & 2	1,948,240	2,245,267
Transferred assets from CFB	9(a)	46,555	-
Other Income	3	545,233	407,792
		<u>2,540,028</u>	<u>2,653,059</u>
Transfer from / (to) Capital Account	12	<u>(11,321)</u>	<u>76,204</u>
		<u>2,528,707</u>	<u>2,729,263</u>
Expenditure			
Administration	4	637,500	639,161
Operations	5	1,882,180	2,073,574
		<u>2,519,680</u>	<u>2,712,735</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		9,027	16,528
Surplus at 1 January		<u>10,886</u>	<u>(5,642)</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 December		<u><u>19,913</u></u>	<u><u>10,886</u></u>

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

Northern Regional Fisheries Board

Business plan

A key management initiative undertaken was the formulation of a Business Plan for all areas of Board activity. Extensive training in relation to Performance Management Development Systems also provided staff with the opportunity to clarify their role, responsibilities and contribution towards delivering an effective and efficient overall service to the public.

Corporate Governance

In 2003 Deloitte and Touche were commissioned to provide a gap analysis of the Board's requirements under Corporate Governance. The Board has adopted the recommendations. The Northern Fisheries Development Society submitted audited annual accounts for 2003 and initiated a programme of works.

Freedom of Information

The Board responded to a total of 5 requests under FOI Act, one under Data Protection Act and one under Freedom of Access to Information.

Health and Safety

The Board is committed to providing safe and accessible facilities for staff and visitors and has committed considerable resources to improve Board infrastructure and work practices.

National programmes

Board staff contributed to several national work groups through the year including: -

- Revision of the Control of Fishing for Salmon Order
- National Pike Review
- National Eel Policy Review
- Revision of Human Resource Policies
- Revision of Recruitment & Selection procedures
- PMDS- National trainers and core implementation team

Protection

<i>Patrol activity</i>	<i>Letterkenny</i>	<i>Ballyshannon</i>
Twin RIB patrols	7	22
Single RIB patrols	27	33
LPV	7	6
Naval	1	0
River & estuary patrols	461	623

Purchase of two new RIBS (7.5 m Tornado and 4.7 m Avon Sea Rider) greatly enhanced the protection capability of the Board in relation to both offshore (drift netting) and inshore patrols (draft net and oyster harvesting).

Ballyshannon District

Salmon returns in the Ballyshannon district were similarly poor, with no significant catches recorded until mid-June. Best catches were taken by drift net from Teelin to Glencolmcille, with poor numbers taken in the inner Donegal Bay area and Erne estuary.

Despite this, 2003 proved to be one of the busiest seasons for protection staff. A large number of illegal stake nets were seized throughout the season, with the majority in operation at weekends or after the close of the season. Increased sea patrols were run towards the end of the season to ensure fishermen confined catches to their remaining allocation of tags to ensure the district quota was not exceeded.

Tags & Quotas

Illegal activity	Letterkenny	Ballyshannon
Total length nets seized (m)	4,200	6,200
Seizures of fish	48	13
Seizures of illegal nets	85	32
Prosecutions pending	21	9

(i) Commercial net sector

Overall compliance with tagging regulations by netsmen and commercial outlets was again very good. District commercial salmon quotas were successfully enforced with a total of 15,416 salmon caught in the Letterkenny district (Quota 17,497) and 9,494 in the Ballyshannon district (Quota 10,344).

There was 100% return of commercial logbooks with all data logged and returned to the CFB by 1 October.

(ii) Angling sector

Compliance with the requirement to tag landed salmon is been generally adhered to, however angling logbook returns continue to be very disappointing (Ballyshannon- 42%; Letterkenny- 46%) and will require legal sanction. Poor returns to the Northern Region are compounded by the high numbers of 1 day, Foyle extension and Special Local licences sold to anglers from Northern Ireland and overseas who represent the categories of anglers displaying lowest return rates for logbooks to date.

(iii) Commercial sales outlets

Over 100 hotels, restaurants and salmon dealers were inspected throughout the season with regard to adherence to tagging requirements. Compliance levels were confirmed to be very high.

The presence of a wild salmon tag is increasingly being recognised as a mark of quality as organic food, thus aiding implementation of the wild salmon tagging scheme.

Angling & Fisheries Development

Angling

Game angling

The first Irish salmon of the year was again taken in Donegal, an 11lb 3ozs caught on Watt's Pool, R. Leannan on the 4th January.

Salmon angling through the season was hampered by prolonged dry spells and resultant low-water conditions, although good catches were taken periodically during spates particularly during September. Trout anglers fared better with the Erne estuary in particular fishing very well throughout the season.

Coarse angling

Coarse angling in the Upper Erne continued to attract good numbers of UK and Continental tourists. The decline in recent years in the numbers of large (over 2 kg) bream in many parts of the Erne was again evident from both match and recreational angler returns.

Sea angling

The prestigious World Deep Sea Angling Championships were held in the Downings, north Donegal in June. Despite very rough weather conditions confining boats to sheltered bays, catches were very good with 18 species taken by the 16 teams fishing. The Italian team was worthy winners with Germany and England placed second and third, respectively.

Donegal Angling Plan

Following the publication of the 'Outline Proposal for Development and Management of Angling in Donegal' in 2002 and appointment of Mr. Kevin Bonner (former Secretary General of Department of Trade, Enterprise & Employment) as independent chairman, an extensive programme of consultation took place during 2003 with 27 interest groups (including angling clubs, State agencies, private owners and community groups) in relation to future management, marketing and promotion of sea and game angling in Donegal. A number of angling clubs chose to be represented at talks by the Donegal Game Angling Federation.

In September, Mr. Bonner presented his findings to the NRFB Board members, County Development Board and Donegal County Council recommending the Board move ahead with management of 7 of the fisheries identified. Following recommendations from Donegal County Council for further direct consultation with angling clubs, and subsequent agreement by the NRFB Board members; further negotiation is scheduled for 2004.

Fisheries Development

Development work remains severely curtailed due to lack of funding since the conclusion of the TRAM programme.

Funded under catchment management, development work continued on the R. Swilly catchment including: -

- Instream works, selective bank clearance, introduction of gravel and placement of low level-weirs.
- Installation of additional stiles and walkways along the lower reaches of the river.
- Provision of improved access for fish over Breenagh Falls in the upper reaches (for completion in 2004).

In Donegal, a total of 874 structures were inspected on 7 major fisheries. Remedial repair work was commenced on selected structures on the Eany and Owenea rivers, with further structures prioritised for attention next year.

In Cavan, an extensive inventory of the current condition of angling stands and stiles in the upper Erne was also completed.

Environment

Upper Erne catchment

Water Quality/Prosecutions/Fish Kills

Two fish kills were recorded during the year. One in L. Avaghon, Co. Monaghan was attributed to the warm, dry summer, and a second in a tributary of Lough Egish, Co. Monaghan caused by silage effluent discharge (which resulted in a successful prosecution). During 2003 eleven convictions were recorded under Section 171 of Fisheries Act totalling €3,100 fines and €31,300.28 costs and expenses.

A total of 12 summer silage-related prosecutions were initiated by comparison with an average of three per annum over the previous five years.

Environmental Monitoring Programme

The Board continued its river and lake monitoring programmes in association with CFB and Cork Institute of Technology. The lake programme involves monthly water sampling at nine lakes (12 sites), which are analysed for Nutrients (N and P), Chlorophyll. Secchi disc readings are taken and algal bloom sampling as blooms arise and lake boat patrol in four lakes monthly to check fish mortalities and from shore when possible as part of ground patrols during the months June to September (inclusive), and the tributaries of one lake (Lough Gowna) are sampled monthly and analysed for Nutrients (N and P). The river programme involves monthly samples on 14 river catchments (21 sites), which are analysed for Nutrients (N and P) and aquatic vegetation monitoring monthly (depending on water levels) at 12 sites.

Planning/ IPC/Waste Licences

During 2003 five major projects and numerous smaller projects were proposed by developers requiring liaison the Board.

Submissions were also made to the EPA and the Local Authorities (Monaghan and Cavan) in relation to IPC and Water Pollution Act licences respectively.

Forestry

There were 26 applications for forestry planting in 2003. The number of felling licences (which require re-planting) increased. The environmental officer attended a three-day training course on Native Woodland Scheme.

Donegal, N. Leitrim & N. Sligo

Hydroelectric schemes

As part of a national review of the potential impact of small-scale hydroelectric schemes on fisheries, the Board is in on-going consultation with the DCMNR and other Boards in relation to finalising acceptable national guidelines towards location and operation of hydro generation facilities. Key fisheries issues include provision of residual or compensatory flows, screening, fish passage and impoundment effects.

Planning and development

A total of 289 planning applications were assessed in 2003, an increase of 115 from 2002, reflecting proposed changes in planning legislation and increased levies. Major development works included completion of the new Carndonagh STW, the Donegal Town main drainage, bridge replacements, channel maintenance and drainage. Meetings were held to discuss the Board's requirements regarding the proposed Ballyshannon-Bundoran by-pass scheduled for commencement in 2004.

Environmental Monitoring Programme

Water quality sampling of Sessiagh and Roosky Lakes indicate that the deterioration in water quality in Sessiagh L. has been reversed through elimination of nutrient inputs from agriculture and domestic sewage sources. Further work is scheduled for Roosky L. next year including farm and septic tank surveys of the catchment and habitat monitoring of feeder streams.

A farm and domestic wastewater survey was completed on the Ballagh subcatchment of L. Melvin system including 23 farm units and 70 domestic wastewater facilities. All information was inputted into GIS.

Catchment Management

Further progress was made in relation to monitoring of water quality; land use and fisheries stocks on L. Melvin catchment this year with publication of an Interim Report due in spring 2004.

Intensive monitoring of L. Melvin carried out in conjunction with Queen's University Belfast and Department of Agriculture for Northern Ireland confirms a gradual decline in water quality over the last decade. Total phosphorous (TP) levels have risen from of 19 $\mu\text{g}/\text{litre}$ in 1990 to 30 $\mu\text{g l}^{-1}$ by 2002. Chlorophyll *a* levels remained fairly static, showing a slight decrease over the same time period (mean 1990 – 4.8 $\mu\text{g l}^{-1}$; mean 2002 3.9 $\mu\text{g l}^{-1}$). In freshwater systems, phosphorous is the nutrient usually limiting primary production, so for TP to increase while chlorophyll *a* shows no increase suggests an alternate limiting factor.

Water Framework Directive

A number of potential reference and intercalibration sites were surveyed during the year in association with the CFB. Several sites were surveyed in Co. Donegal including the Gweebarra R., Clonmany R. and Cronaniv Burn (Dunlewy catchment). One site was fished in Co. Cavan on the Swanlinbar R.

THE NORTHERN REGIONAL FISHERIES BOARD

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2003

	Notes	2003 €	2002 €
Income			
Oireachtas Income	1	2,052,187	2,216,798
Other Income	3	277,459	251,334
		<u>2,329,646</u>	<u>2,468,132</u>
Transfer from / (to) Capital Account	11	43,843	19,242
		<u>2,373,489</u>	<u>2,487,374</u>
Expenditure			
Administration	4	413,998	547,979
Operations	5	2,079,734	2,137,847
		<u>2,493,732</u>	<u>2,685,826</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year		(120,243)	(198,452)
Surplus at 1 January		<u>205,418</u>	<u>403,869</u>
Surplus/(Deficit) at 31 December		<u><u>85,175</u></u>	<u><u>205,417</u></u>

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

Appendix 1 Fisheries Development & Surveys

Instream/Spawning Enhancement		Eastern Board	Southern Board	South Western Board	Shannon Board	Western Board	North Western Board	Northern Board
No. of Rivers/Streams Enhanced	No.	5	4	3	2	5	4	1
Investment In Instream / Spawning Enhancement	Value £	53,636	16,666	6,775	50,000	25,000	55,000	50,000
Length of River and Stream Developed	km	12.5	3	2.2	8	4	9.8	4.5

Angling Development		Eastern Board	Southern Board	South Western Board	Shannon Board	Western Board	North Western Board	Northern Board
No. of Angling Facility Enhancement Projects	No.	11		13	1	1	5	3
Investment in Angling Facility Enhancement	Value £	32,728		14,232	60,000	10,000	15,000	35,000
Angling Pools Created	No.	28				2		5
Stiles, Footbridges, Platforms, Etc.	No.	19			950	30	30	24
Additional Fishing Spaces Created	No.	44			10		10	68

Surveys		Eastern Board	Southern Board	South Western Board	Shannon Board	Western Board	North Western Board	Northern Board
Salmonid Surveys	No.	25	2	2	8	2	6	
Coarse Fish Surveys	No.	1	2	1	1		4	
Other	No.							
Investment in Fishery Surveys	Value £	22,831	4,298	5,690	25,000		33,000	

Appendix 2 Pollution Control & Water Quality

Pollution Control		Eastern Board	Southern Board	South Westen Board	Shannon Board	Western Board	North Western Board	Northern Board
Reported Fish Kills	No.	7	7	4	10	6	3	4
Fish Kills Caused By Agriculture	No.	2	1	2	2	2		1
Fish Kills Caused By Industry	No.	1	1		3	1		
Fish Kills Caused by Eutrophication	No.	1	1	2	2	2	2	1
Fish Kills Caused By Local Authority		3	2					
Other	No.	38*	2		3	1	1	2
Pollution Inspections	No.	526	368	203	1,650	51	551	412
Warning Letters	No.	55	379	94	24	56	25	201
Pollution Prosecutions Initiated	No.	10	4	7	27	1	1	14

* 31 Avoca

Water Quality		Eastern Board	Southern Board	South Westen Board	Shannon Board	Western Board	North Western Board	Northern Board
Water Samples Taken	No.	268	206	348	2,382	553	241	1,952
Samples Tested by Regional Board Laboratory	No.	208	165	168	41	217		20
Samples Tested by C.F.B. Laboratory for The R.F.B.	No.	126	10	150	2,149	366	120	983
Samples Tested Externally	No.	60	32	30	192	77	121	88
Total Water Tests	No.	268	206	348	2,382	553	241	1,952
Average No. of Determinands Tested	No.	40	2	5	6	13	4	15

Appendix 3 Fish Stocking

Fish Stocking	Eastern Board	Southern Board	South Western Board	Shannon Board	Western Board	North Western Board	Northern Board	Total
Brown Trout Stocked	100,000	4	10,000	374,750	18,874	4,350	100,000	607,978
Salmon Stocked				109,387	179,569	182,000	80,000	550,956
Rainbow Trout Stocked	1,500		58,000	9,500	139,569	3,318	1,500	213,387
Coarse Fish Stocked/Transferred	10,000			2,300	23	138	300	12,761

BROWN TROUT CFB STOCKING TO REGIONAL BOARDS - 2003

REGION	Fry	2 Year Spring	Total
EASTERN	100,000	1,300	101,300
NORTHERN		2,000	2,000
NORTH WESTERN			0
SHANNON			0
SOUTHERN			0
SOUTH WESTERN		33,000	33,000
WESTERN			0

RAINBOW TROUT CFB STOCKING TO REGIONAL BOARDS – 2003

REGION	1+	Total
EASTERN	1,000	1,000
SHANNON	50,000	50,000

Appendix 4 Fishing Licences and Board Managed Fisheries

Rod Angling Licence Issues	Eastern Board	Southern Board	South Western Board	Shannon Board	Western Board	North Western Board	Northern Board	Total
Salmon / Sea Trout	3,329	3,777	5,963	1,915	3,265	8,967	6,808	34,024
Share Certificates								

Commercial Licence Issues	Eastern Board	Southern Board	South Western Board	Shannon Board	Western Board	North Western Board	Northern Board	Total
Salmon								
Drift Net	16	252	147	86	105	118	154	878
Draft Net	180	9	80	95	21	35	101	521
Snap Net	0	138						138
Trap							19	19
Other	32	1	2	12			27	74
TOTALS	228	400	229	193	126	153	301	1,630
Eels	25	30	12	12	49	23	50	201
Molluscs	127			110	8	74	21	340

Board Managed Fisheries		Eastern Board	Southern Board	South Western Board	Shannon Board	Western Board	North Western Board	Northern Board	Total
Fisheries Managed	No.	3	2	13	27	6	6	4	61
Rod Days	No.	5,196			3,064	3,500	6,209	1,284	19,253
Revenue	€	3,712	7,816	92,130	71,419	180,600	202,112	22,105	579,894

Appendix 5

Commercial Salmon and Sea Trout Catches 2003

Region	Licence Type	District	No. of Salmon	No. of sea trout (over 40cm)
WESTERN	DRAFT NET	GALWAY	60	0
	DRIFT NET	GALWAY	4,494	0
	TOTAL	GALWAY	4,554	0
	DRAFT NET	BALLINAKIL	1,487	0
	DRIFT NET	BALLINAKIL	5,484	0
	TOTAL	BALLINAKIL	6,971	0
	DRIFT NET	CONNEMARA	3,043	0
	TOTAL	CONNEMARA	3,043	0
	TOTAL	WESTERN	14,568	0
EASTERN	DRAFT NET	DROGHEDA	1,248	88
	TOTAL	DROGHEDA	1,248	88
	DRAFT NET	DUBLIN	25	173
	DRIFT NET	DUBLIN	20	40
	TOTAL	DUBLIN	45	213
	DRAFT NET	DUNDALK	427	134
	TOTAL	DUNDALK	427	134
	DRIFT NET	WEXFORD	874	310
	TOTAL	WEXFORD	874	310
TOTAL	EASTERN	2,594	745	
NORTHERN	DRAFT NET	BALLYSHANNON	2,695	35
	DRIFT NET	BALLYSHANNON	6,758	6
	TOTAL	BALLYSHANNON	9,453	41
	DRAFT NET	LETTERKENNY	1,473	106
	DRIFT NET	LETTERKENNY	13,800	5
	LOOP NET	LETTERKENNY	32	0
	TOTAL	LETTERKENNY	15,305	111
	TOTAL	NORTHERN	24,758	152
NORTH WEST	DRAFT NET	BALLINA	30	0
	DRIFT NET	BALLINA	21,399	4
	TOTAL	BALLINA	21,429	4
	DRAFT NET	BANGOR	1,554	0
	DRIFT NET	BANGOR	4,541	0
	TOTAL	BANGOR	6,095	0
	DRIFT NET	SLIGO	5,028	0
	TOTAL	SLIGO	5,028	0
TOTAL	NORTH WEST	32,552	4	
SOUTH WEST	BAG NET	CORK	120	0
	DRAFT NET	CORK	2,995	74
	DRIFT NET	CORK	21,644	169
	TOTAL	CORK	24,759	243
	BAG NET	KERRY	59	0
	DRAFT NET	KERRY	5,386	66
	DRIFT NET	KERRY	24,493	34
	TOTAL	KERRY	29,938	100
TOTAL	SOUTH WEST	54,697	343	
SHANNON	DRAFT NET	SHANNON	2,838	44
	DRIFT NET	SHANNON	11,299	7
	TOTAL	SHANNON	14,137	51
SOUTHERN	DRAFT NET	LISMORE	0	0
	DRIFT NET	LISMORE	9,461	164
	SNAP NET	LISMORE	61	4
	TOTAL	LISMORE	9,522	168
	DRAFT NET	WATERFORD	8	0
	DRIFT NET	WATERFORD	9,758	283
	SNAP NET	WATERFORD	4,269	199
	HEAD WEIR	WATERFORD	11	0
	TOTAL	WATERFORD	14,046	482
	TOTAL	SOUTHERN	23,568	650
Grand Total		National	166,874	1,945

Appendix 6

Rod and line salmon and sea trout catch in each of the Fisheries Districts in 2002, taken from Tagging Scheme

DISTRICT	No. of Salmon	No. of Sea Trout	Total
DUNDALK	223	18	241
DROGHEDA	644	32	676
DUBLIN	25	35	60
WEXFORD	366	82	448
WATERFORD	2,089	85	2,174
LISMORE	3,250	13	3,263
CORK	1,027	84	1,111
KERRY	1,604	419	2,023
LIMERICK	1,132	333	1,465
GALWAY	814	0	814
CONNEMARA	93	0	93
BALLINAKILL	913	1	914
BANGOR	1,503	34	1,537
BALLINA	10,923	87	11,010
SLIGO	1,601	12	1,613
BALLYSHANNON	1,357	25	1,382
LETTERKENNY	1,351	81	1,432
UNKNOWN	495	122	617
TOTAL	29,408	1,464	30,872

Appendix 7 Marine Tagging Programme

CENTRAL FISHERIES BOARD DEEP SEA-ANGLING LOGBOOK STATISTICS, 1978 - 2003

TOTAL NO. OF:	Year																			
	3 year av. 1978 - 1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Centres covered	10	14	19	14	13	12	16	17	20	17	22	21	30	26	32	33	34	38	39	42
Boats making returns	20	18	27	17	16	18	21	21	25	26	35	34	47	47	56	56	58	74	74	78
Angling days covered in sample (boat days)	1185	1069	1234	811	795	868	1160	1298	1535	1763	2177	2371	2725	3053	3749	3961	4073	5039	5006	5167
Shark angling days covered in sample	211	126	102	163	141	74	140	148	139	238	252	320	277	359	339	498	337	411	330	447
Ground angling days covered in sample	974	943	1132	648	654	794	1020	1150	1396	1525	1925	2051	2448	2694	3430	3416	3736	4628	4676	4720
Rod days covered in sample	5538	5479	6202	4024	4006	4414	6759	7145	8319	9999	13212	14662	16248	18589	23591	24967	26135	33203	32844	34873
NO. OF ROD DAYS PER NATIONALITY																				
<i>(% of total)</i>																				
Dutch	2345	1949	1851	1028	587	948	1947	1655	1579	2020	2319	3335	3821	4961	4782	5436	6688	6846	6216	6503
(%)	42.35	35.57	29.84	25.55	14.65	21.4	28.8	23.16	18.9	20.2	17.55	22.74	23.52	26.69	20.21	21.77	25.6	20.64	18.93	18.65
German	1052	881	1607	645	573	413	464	486	491	696	657	762	1148	1378	1656	1770	1457	2138	2480	2198
(%)	18.99	16.08	25.91	16.03	14.3	9.2	6.8	6.8	5.9	6.96	4.97	5.2	7.07	7.41	7.01	7.08	5.58	6.42	7.55	6.3
British	754	935	739	453	531	738	957	1340	1809	2496	3571	3481	3637	3669	5509	6004	5882	7256	7591	8064
(%)	13.62	17.06	11.92	11.26	13.25	16.7	14.1	18.75	21.7	24.96	27.03	23.7	22.39	19.74	23.33	24.04	22.51	21.85	23.11	23.13
Irish	797	1051	1514	1429	1468	1615	2028	2486	3061	3422	4664	4548	5829	7002	9754	9797	10109	14530	14741	15998
(%)	14.39	19.18	24.41	35.51	36.64	36.58	30	34.79	36.7	34.22	35.3	31.01	35.88	37.67	41.32	39.23	38.68	43.76	44.88	45.87
French	285	173	246	207	329	195	523	494	599	442	857	1003	685	445	570	537	435	530	352	369
(%)	5.14	3.16	3.97	5.14	8.21	4.4	7.73	6.9	7.2	4.42	6.49	6.84	4.22	2.39	2.41	2.15	1.66	1.59	1.07	1.06
Belgian	136	142	21	69	74	80	317	186	315	325	499	671	507	459	412	436	316	554	354	531
(%)	2.45	2.6	0.34	1.71	1.84	1.81	4.69	2.6	3.7	3.3	3.78	4.61	3.12	2.47	1.7	1.72	1.2	1.67	1.08	1.53
Others	169	348	224	193	444	425	524	485	465	589	645	862	621	675	950	1022	1246	1349	1110	1210
(%)	3.06	6.35	3.61	4.8	11.08	9.6	7.75	6.7	5.5	5.89	4.88	3.9	3.8	3.63	4.02	4.01	4.76	4.06	3.38	3.46
NO. OF:																				
Anglers per boat, per day	4.71	5.12	5.03	4.96	5.03	5.08	5.09	5.5	5.4	5.67	6.06	6.18	5.96	6.09	6.25	6.28	6.41	6.58	6.56	6.74
Blue shark per boat, per day (Shark Angling)	2.62	1.34	1.68	3.73	2.74	1.56	2.6	1.86	1.84	2.1	3.6	2.86	2.45	4.18	3.16	2.75	3.51	3.84	2.27	1.84
Cod per boat, per day	1	0.79	1.97	1.66	1.47	1.23	1	3.05	3.93	2.24	0.45	2.12	3.25	2.08	2.6	3.35	2.49	3.03	2.89	4.16
Coalfish per boat, per day	3.77	2.86	4.9	2.21	8.3	11.5	18.14	10.57	14.7	13.88	9.68	9.36	7.28	10.1	8.51	7.71	7.27	7.42	5.85	6.19
Conger per boat, per day	1.64	1.75	1.86	1.58	2.66	1.75	2.2	3.11	2.4	2.52	3.16	2.86	2.62	2.75	2.29	2.38	3.7	3.22	3.03	3.15
Spurdog per boat, per day	2.52	1.87	2.43	1.94	1.47	0.6	1.03	0.4	0.22	0.05	0.12	0.02	0.12	0.86	0.88	0.94	0.66	0.96	0.62	0.23
Lesser Spotted Dogfish per boat, per day	3.57	4.71	5.46	4.83	6.33	7.7	7.6	9	4.93	6.17	5.23	3.56	4.75	5.1	4.13	4.15	3.73	3.41	4.37	3.47
Ling per boat, per day	1.23	1.33	1.68	2.34	3.01	1.95	2.13	1.95	2.02	2.74	1.9	2.04	2.78	2.79	2.5	3.05	3.52	3.25	2.76	2.66
Pollack per boat, per day	6.78	5.35	13.35	10.12	15.04	14.2	13.1	10.5	12.54	13.8	15.54	16.87	17.17	18.53	13.73	12.2	12.4	15.51	18.85	16.73
NO. OF:																				
Cod per angler, per day	0.18	0.16	0.36	0.33	0.23	0.22	0.17	0.51	0.62	0.43	0.08	0.36	0.49	0.31	0.43	0.53	0.38	0.43	0.4	0.3
Coalfish per angler, per day	0.67	0.56	0.89	0.45	1.35	2.07	3.1	1.77	2.32	2.7	1.72	1.62	1.21	1.52	1.39	1.22	1.11	1.09	0.81	0.92
Conger per angler, per day	0.31	0.3	0.34	0.32	0.43	0.31	0.39	0.52	0.38	0.49	0.56	0.49	0.39	0.41	0.37	0.37	0.56	0.46	0.42	0.46
Spurdog per angler, per day	0.49	0.37	0.44	0.39	0.24	0.12	0.17	0.07	0.03	0.01	0.02	0	0.02	0.13	0.14	0.14	0.1	0.13	0.08	0.03
Lesser Spotted Dogfish per angler, per day	0.67	0.93	1.00	0.97	1.03	1.38	1.32	1.51	0.78	1.2	0.93	0.62	0.72	0.77	0.67	0.66	0.57	0.49	0.61	0.51
Ling per angler, per day	0.23	0.26	0.31	0.47	0.49	0.35	0.36	0.33	0.32	0.53	0.34	0.35	0.42	0.42	0.41	0.48	0.54	0.46	0.38	0.39
Pollack per angler, per day	1.28	1.06	2.44	2.04	2.45	2.5	2.2	1.76	1.98	2.68	2.76	2.92	2.6	2.79	2.24	1.95	1.9	2.24	2.63	2.48

Appendix 8 Deep Sea Angling Logbook Statistics

TAG AND RECAPTURE OF MARINE SPECIES UP TO DECEMBER, 2003

Species	No.s Tagged To Dec. 2003	Numbers Recapt. to Dec. 2003	% Return	Days at Liberty	Dist. Travelled (Miles)	Numbers Tagged in 2003
BLUE SHARK	17329	724	4.17%	Feb-99	0-4250	333
PORBEAGLE SHARK	68	7	11.47%	71-3947	89-2300	0
THRESHER SHARK	1	0	0%	-	-	0
TOPE	4029	318	7.89%	28-6587	0-2185	238
MONKFISH	1024	189	18.45%	0-4525	0-720	1
COMMON SKATE	748	105	14.03%	Oct-75	0-120	138
LONG NOSED SKATE	3	0	0%	-	1	0
WHITE SKATE	21	1	4.76%	975	3	0
BLONDE RAY	403	26	6.45%	26-1871	0-45	54
UNDULATE RAY	1038	55	5.20%	0-2676	0-60	38
THORNBACK RAY	7796	262	3.36%	0-2190	0-80	184
PAINTED RAY	254	13	5.11%	13-1398	0-20	0
HOMELYN RAY	299	11	3.88%	294-1373	0-72	10
BASS	1805	56	3.10%	0-1373	0-88	0
MULLET	311	5	1.60%	0-275	0-200	0
FLOUNDER	287	30	10.40%	0-738	0-3½	0
STING RAY	30	0	0%	-	-	2
BULL HUSS	26	3	11.53%	103-1499	0-125	0
DABS	43	2	4.65%	378	2	0
SMOOTH HOUND	14	0	0%	-	-	0
PLAICE	5	1	20%	70	0	0
BLUEFIN TUNA	7	0	0%	-	-	4

TOTAL NUMBER OF FISH TAGGED TO-DATE 35527