



Angling
Ireland



SALMON ANGLING
IN IRELAND



INTRODUCTION

Ireland has long been known as one of the best salmon angling destinations in Europe and anglers have been visiting Ireland for many years in a quest for *Salmo salar*.

So, what makes Ireland such an outstanding salmon angling destination? The Atlantic salmon ("Bradán" in Gaelic), is a native Irish fish and most rivers get a run of salmon from spring until autumn. Salmon can be caught in Irish waters from January right through to the end of September and, with approximately 70,000 kilometres of rivers and streams, there is an abundance of spawning and nursery habitat for juvenile fish. The climate is another factor. Sitting in the north Atlantic, Ireland has a moderate humid climate providing sufficient precipitation for the many spate rivers along its Atlantic sea board. Mild, wet winters mean spawning streams remain ice-free, and frequent rain means low water levels are usually rare. Finally, Ireland's mostly wild and rugged environment and rivers add to the overall experience.

But it's not all about the fishing. Ireland has a wealth of scenery and history to explore if you take a break from fishing. Whether you want to explore the breath-taking Wild Atlantic Way or Ireland's mystic Ancient East...it's up to you! There are great restaurants, cafes and pubs, most of which serve good food as well as drink. What better way to relax after a long day's salmon fishing than with a tasty evening meal and a pint or two...

This brochure contains some basic information to help you get started on your Irish salmon angling adventure. There is a short description of the best times to go, fishing methods and a brief introduction to some of the fisheries that consistently produce salmon. The map on the flip side of this brochure highlights these fisheries and the key towns in which you could base yourself.



There is much more detailed information on the www.fishinginireland.info website and on the accompanying Google map: <https://tinyurl.com/ybc54pek>

SEASONS

Salmon fishing in Ireland opens on January 1st on a handful of rivers and after that the remainder of fisheries open on various dates in February, March, April, May and June. The majority of fisheries close on September 30th but a few rivers remain open until October 12th. For up to date information on opening and closing dates for individual fisheries please visit www.fishinginireland.info

From January to June spring salmon (springers) are the main quarry. These salmon tend to be larger than summer fish and anglers have the best chance of catching one on rivers such as the Drowes in Counties Donegal & Leitrim, the River Laune in Co. Kerry or the Delphi Fishery in Co. Mayo. Springers can also be caught in loughs such as Carrowmore Lake in Co. Mayo which can produce some fine fish from March onwards. There are also some smaller spate rivers such as the Owenduff River in north Mayo that can get a decent run of spring salmon.

From mid June onwards the more numerous grilse or 'summer salmon' predominate. They typically weigh from 1.5kg to 3kg and are widely found throughout the country. This is when fisheries like the Moy in Co. Mayo, the Galway Fishery in Co. Galway and the Munster Blackwater in Co. Cork can provide spectacular sport in a great setting. In addition to the bigger rivers there are numerous smaller systems, mainly in the western half of the country, which can provide excellent grilse fishing. Irish grilse runs are still some of the most prolific in Western Europe and offer the salmon fisherman a great chance of success.

METHODS

For the angler in Ireland the three main methods employed for salmon angling are fly fishing, spinning and bait fishing.

Fly Fishing

The classic way to fish for salmon is with the fly. Double handed rods are not always essential and usually a single handed rod or a switch rod will be sufficient to cover the water properly. On most Irish rivers one would need nothing larger than a 10 to 12ft rod # 7/8 with a

floating or an intermediate line. There are the odd exceptions such as the Cork Blackwater, the Galway Weir Fishery or the River Moy where a double handed rod can be more suitable. Many anglers use different density poly leaders in combination with a 10 to 15lbs. mono or fluorocarbon tippet. Traditionally, on some rivers such as the Moy or Mourne anglers also fish the “bubble and fly” using spinning tackle. Fly-fishing for salmon on loughs is an Irish specialty. Most loughs fish best when there is a “good wave.” Typical rods for lough style salmon fishing would be 10 to 11ft long # 7/8 and salmon are fished for in much the same way as one fishes for trout. The majority of fishing would be using floating lines and the standard cast consists of 3 flies (one point fly & two droppers). While a traditional river pattern such as a shrimp fly is typically fished on the point, the droppers usually consist of standard trout or sea trout flies in size 8 to 12 depending on the wave. It would be more than usual for one of these flies to be a Green Peter.

Ireland is the birthplace of many famous salmon flies such as the Thunder and Lightning or the Black Doctor to name but a few. However, when one thinks of fly patterns, the shrimp fly must be seen as the quintessential Irish style salmon fly. Though everyone has their favourites, one would never go too far wrong with patterns such as the Ally's Shrimp, Bann Special Shrimp, Wilkinson Shrimp, Curry's Red Shrimp, Shadow Shrimp or Foxford Shrimp. Irish flies tend to start on the small side. Size 8 flies are often used in higher cooler water, then as the water warms, the flies are scaled down to 12s and even 14s in some cases. Micro-tubes have also become quite popular in recent years. Other salmon flies of note are Cascade, Willie Gunn, Hairy Mary, Silver Stroat, Green Highlander or Collie Dog.

Spinning

Spinning for salmon can be a very effective method when conditions suit and in heavy water it may also be the only realistic option to take a fish. Usually a 10 to 11ft rod with a 10 to 60g casting weight will be able to cope with most conditions. Probably the most favoured lure in Ireland is the Flying C, with red and black being two of the most popular colours. Other popular spinning baits include Toby, Copper & Silver Spoon or small plugs. As the water warms up, lure size should be reduced and the speed of retrieve increased. Spinning upstream can be highly effective when the grilse are running. On lakes, trolling a Devon or Toby can be very effective particularly in the early part of the season as it enables you to cover a lot of ground during a day's fishing.

Bait

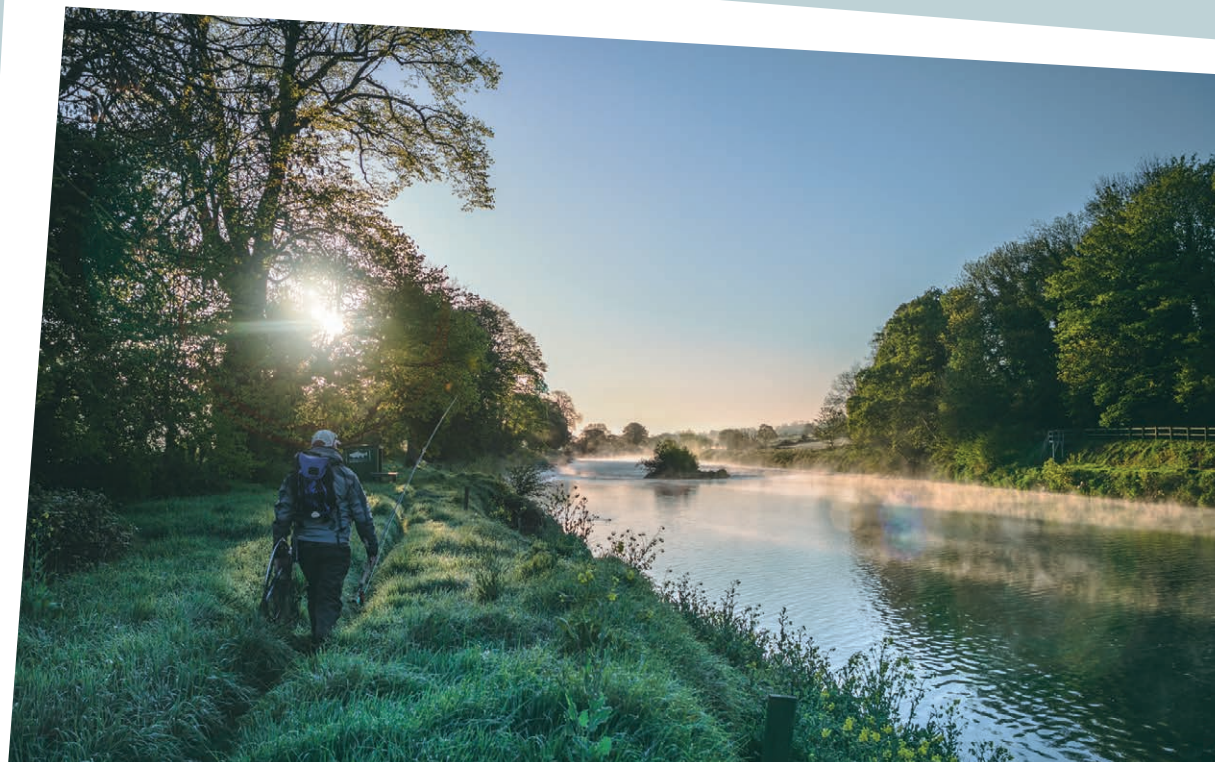
The main bait fishing techniques are shrimp or prawn and worming. Prawns and shrimps are usually presented on a float rig and trotted down the current. Worms can also be presented in this way or presented static, close to a known salmon lie. The normal way to fish a worm is to use a bunch of three on a single hook; however a single worm can also produce results. Rods for bait fishing are generally 11ft long and have a casting weight of up to 80g.

GUIDING

There are a large number of guides and ghillies specialising in salmon fishing in Ireland and it is usually advisable for an angler visiting a fishery for the first time to hire a guide for a day or two. This is particularly the case with the larger rivers, as a guide will have local knowledge of the water and specific salmon lies which will greatly increase chances of hooking up. You will need to contact and make your own arrangements with guides and to help with this, there is a list of angling guides available at: www.fishinginireland.info/guides/index.htm

REGULATIONS

In order to fish for salmon in Ireland anglers are required to obtain a “Salmon Rod Licence”. The licence can be obtained from Inland Fisheries Ireland, any rod licence distributor or online at <https://store.fishinginireland.info/> There are a number of different licence types available (day, annual, district, 21 day etc.). For the visiting angler, the 21 day licence is probably the most convenient one. At the time of writing (2019), there is an annual bag limit of 10 salmon or sea trout (over 40cm) and all fish which are kept have to be tagged and recorded in the log book. However, depending on the time of year and individual fishery, additional restrictions such as bag limits, “Catch & Release” etc. may apply. The Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme regulates salmon



and sea trout fishing in Ireland and is administered by Inland Fisheries Ireland. Please note that the regulations and bye-laws are subject to change. Contact your local Inland Fisheries Ireland office for information on individual rivers.

For the vast majority of salmon fisheries, anglers will require a permit in addition to the State Licence. Each fishery can have its own rules on methods allowed, bag limits etc., however we encourage all anglers to practice C&R (see below). Fisheries regulations are subject to change and so anglers should check for the latest information on: <http://fishinginireland.info/regulations.htm>

CATCH & RELEASE

We all have a responsibility to protect and conserve our fisheries so that they can be enjoyed by future generations. Most fisheries face multiple threats including pollution, water abstraction and illegal fishing, all of which have a negative impact on fish stocks. For that reason, we would ask that all anglers consider practicing Catch & Release for the majority of fish they catch. Record any trophy fish with a quick photo and then carefully return to the water. Remember: [#CPRsavesfish](#)



FURTHER INFORMATION

Angling Information

This guide provides a basic introduction to salmon fishing in Ireland and gives a summary of some of the key fisheries. However, there are a number of resources where you can find more detailed and up-to-date angling information. Firstly, there is a dedicated angling website which has more detailed information on individual fisheries and service providers at: www.fishinginireland.info

If you are planning on fishing in Northern Ireland or on the Foyle and Carlingford catchments on either side of the border you should consult:

www.nidirect.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling and www.ufishireland.org/

IFI also produces a weekly Angling Update which provides up-to-date reports on what anglers are catching and where. You can sign up to be emailed the weekly Angling Update by emailing contact@fisheriesireland.ie

General Tourism

Ireland also has a general tourism website www.ireland.com that will help you plan your trip to Ireland. It provides a wealth of information on travel and accommodation as well as information on things to do and see while visiting the island.

Safety

Angling is a water based activity with changing conditions and dangers that are sometimes hidden. Drowning is an ever present risk and you should exercise utmost care for your own safety and that of angling partners/buddies.

Please remember the following when going fishing:

- Wear a life jacket.
- Follow advice on warning signs, permits and notices
- Don't take any risks when wading or fishing from boat, shore or bank
- Check the weather forecast and tide tables before you go
- Take time to observe weather, water and tide conditions while fishing
- Fish with a partner/buddy or let someone know where you're going
- Take a fully charged mobile phone in a waterproof case/bag.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear

For a more detailed guide to safety when angling please visit:

www.fishinginireland.info/safety.htm

Leave No Trace

Please adhere to the seven principles of Leave No Trace Ireland:

Plan ahead and prepare; Travel and camp on durable surfaces; Dispose of waste properly; Leave what you find; Minimise campfire impacts (be careful with fire); Respect wildlife; Be considerate of other visitors.

Vehicles should be parked in designated areas and in such a manner that they do not cause obstruction.



Anglers should fish responsibly and sustainably – where possible use single barbless hooks and practice no-weight, “in the water” catch and release.

www.leavenotraceireland.org/

Biosecurity

Aquatic Invasive Species and fish pathogens are readily transferred from one water-course to another on angling tackle, boats and protective clothing. These can be very damaging to resident fish stocks, the aquatic habitat and the general environment. We would ask that all anglers inspect and clean their gear prior to travelling to Ireland to fish.

Full information on prevention of invasive species is available on our website at:

www.fisheriesireland.ie/Research/invasive-species.html

Or via Invasive Species Ireland at

<http://invasivespeciesireland.com/cops/water-users/anglers/>

Disclaimer

Every effort has been taken to ensure accuracy in the compilation of this publication and associated maps and web pages. Inland Fisheries Ireland cannot accept responsibility for errors or omissions therein. Some sporting activities may by their nature be hazardous and involve risk. It is recommended in such cases to take out personal accident insurance. While many operators would have public liability insurance it is always advisable to check with the establishment or operator concerned as to the level of cover carried.

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MAIN IRISH SALMON FISHERIES

This brochure features some of the top Irish salmon fisheries that not only consistently produce salmon but also provide an adequate infrastructure for the visiting angler. In addition to the mentioned fisheries, there are many other fisheries which can provide great salmon fishing at times. Featuring all Irish salmon fisheries in detail would go beyond the scope of this brochure so this is just a sample of some of the main ones.

The River May is Ireland's most prolific salmon river. It rises in Co. Sligo and provides some of the best salmon fishing available in Ireland. On its way to the sea it flows through the town of Foxford, Co. Mayo which is an excellent base for the visiting angler. There are over 15 individual fisheries on the May catering for any taste or budget. In Ballina, Ireland's Salmon Capital, the May reaches the tidal waters and it is here where the world-renowned Ridge Pool attracts hundreds of anglers each year! The river gets a decent spring run but the prime time on the May, without doubt, are the summer months when the grilse are running in vast numbers.

The Munster Blackwater rises in Co. Kerry and flows for over 160 kilometres through Counties Kerry, Cork and Waterford to the tide at Cappoquin. It gets its name due to the peaty colouration of the water and it is said not to run truly clear until July. It is a large and broad river with plenty of pools, streams and gillies and the fishing is spread among many private and club fisheries. It rates as one of the best salmon rivers in Ireland, getting good runs of fish from early season right through to season close in September. Also situated in Co. Cork, the **River Bandeen**, & **River Ilen** get good runs of salmon and are well worth fishing.

The Corrib River or Galway Fishery starts at Nimmo's Pier, near the Claddagh, in Galway Bay and runs all the way up to the entrance of Lough Corrib. The best fishing is on 'The Weir' fishery immediately downstream of the Galway Weir. There can be good spring salmon fishing, but the best months are May, June & early July when the grilse run is usually at full swing. This fishery can produce extraordinary fishing during the grilse run when water levels are right and so the fishing is in high demand. You need to book early in the year to ensure you get a slot.

The River Drowes is famous for its early season salmon, being one of the few rivers opening on 1st January and it regularly produces Ireland's first salmon of the year. The river flows for about 8 kilometres draining the 270 square kilometre catchment into the Atlantic and generally keeps good water levels right through the season, being fed by Lough Melvin. There is a good run of spring salmon from the 1st January through to April/May with some summer and autumn fish. The main grilse run starts around the end of May peaking around June/July. Only a short distance away from the Drowes, the **River Duff** can also provide good salmon fishing during a flood.

Located in Co. Kerry, the **River Leane** is a short (23 km) river by the Killarney Lakes. It has over 60 named pools and can produce some spring fish in early season, mainly in the upper sections of the river. By May these fish are well distributed throughout the river and this month is known for producing bigger fish. Grilse begin to run in May too and while the run peaks in June fishing remains good right up to season end.

Carrowmore Lake, situated in the far northwest of Co. Mayo is the premier spring salmon fishing lough in the country. The best spring fishing begins with the first mild and settled weather in late February and peaks in April and May. The lake, which is also noted for its grilse and sea trout fishing is over 6.5 kilometres long and nearly 5 kilometres wide at its widest point. Carrowmore is drained by the Muehri River, which joins the Carrowmore River before entering Tullaghan Bay. The Owenmore and its sister river the **Owenduff** can also be prolific spring fisheries. Lough Bellew and the nearby **Burrisheale** Fishery are also well-known salmon loughs located in Co. Mayo.

The Ballisodare River is just 8 kilometres long and flows from Collooney into Ballisodare Bay. With its tributaries it drains a catchment of 650 square kilometres, which includes Lough Arrow. Short as it is, it's probably the most prolific salmon fishery in Co. Sligo. Most of the fishing action takes place in the tidal section below the "Butt" of the Ballisodare Falls and the river itself above the Falls is also extremely productive throughout the season.

The River Suir and its tributaries drain most of County Tipperary. The Suir is 185 kilometres long and passes by the Galtees, the Knockmoldown and the Cameragh Mountains before joining her sister rivers the Barrow and Nore, and entering the sea. The best of the salmon fishing on the Suir extends downstream from Ardaraun to Carrick-on-Suir. The Suir gets some early fish though salmon fishing does not really start until the grilse run in June/July. In August and September the Suir has runs of large grilse and an autumn run of some much larger fish which are believed to be multi spawners.

The River Feale is a big fast flowing spate river subject to flooding during periods of persistent rainfall. The river rises in the mountain district of north Co. Cork and flows westerly for 75 kilometres through the county towns of Abbeystead and Listowel and enters the sea south of Ballybunion. There are fish in the river from the start of the season and the best of the spring fishing is up to mid-April depending on water levels. Grilse start to run from mid-June and there is often an improvement in mid-July, with very good fishing for larger fish from mid-August to the end of the season in September, in suitable water conditions.

The River Boyne rises in Co. Kildare and meanders its way in a north easterly direction for over 100 kilometres through counties Offaly, Meath and Louth before entering the Irish Sea below the historic town of Drogheda. The main salmon and sea trout fisheries are located on the lower reaches of the river between Navan and Drogheda and most of the fishing is controlled by angling associations with some being maintained by private fishery owners. In summer the best of the salmon fishing is located between Slane and Oldbridge. Good numbers of salmon are taken annually between the months of July and September on the fisheries downstream of Slane village.

The privately owned **Delphi Fishery** is one of many excellent salmon fisheries in the West of Ireland. The fishery consists of the Bunderrogha River, and two larger lakes draining the Delphi Valley, Fingahugh and Doolough. Spring salmon run into the fishery from the start of the season in February right up to June, with most taken on the river. Grilse enter the river from late May, with the run peaking in July. Other notable salmon fisheries in the west of Ireland include the **Ballynahinch** & **Lough Inagh** System, **Castello** & **Fermoyale** and the **River Errill** to name but a few.

The Owenree River runs for some 21 kilometres draining Lough Ea in the west of the Croagh, into the sea at Ardara. The Owenree is primarily a spate river taking around 1 to 2 days to run off after a good flood and is regarded as one of the best salmon rivers in Co. Donegal. The river has a run of spring salmon, grilse and sea trout but the best fishing is during the summer months when the grilse are running. Other popular salmon fisheries in Co. Donegal include the **Eike**, **Owenberris**, **Berry** and **Glen River**.

Lough Curran, is located east of the picturesque village of Waterville on the scenic Ring of Kerry. Lough Curran covers an area of approximately 10km² and drains directly into the sea at Ballisodare Bay. Mostly known for its sea trout fishing, the lake can also provide good salmon fishing from as early as April/May. The nearby **River Inny** and the **Garagh** System located approximately 35 kilometres further north can also provide good salmon fishing at times.

IRELAND/NORTHERN IRELAND

The island of Ireland consists of two separate countries: the Republic of Ireland (also known as Eire or Southern Ireland) and Northern Ireland, which is part of the UK. As a result of this, there are three separate agencies that control fishing on the island of Ireland: Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) which controls the majority of the fishing in the Republic of Ireland; the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) which controls most of the fishing in Northern Ireland; and the Loughs Agency, which controls the fishing on the Foyles and Carlingford systems that span the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland. These areas are marked on the adjacent map.

This brochure only provides information on fishing in IFI controlled waters in Ireland. Anglers wishing to fish in Loughs Agency or DAERA controlled waters should check the relevant website for information before fishing: DAERA: www.daera.gov.uk/information-and-services/outdoor-recreation-and-sport/angling Loughs Agency: www.loughsireland.org/



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