



Agenda item 6.1  
For information

**Council**

**CNL(16)37**

***Annual Progress Report  
on Actions Taken Under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2015***

***EU - UK (Northern Ireland)***



## CNL(16)37

### ***Annual Progress Report on Actions taken under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2015***

The primary purposes of the Annual Progress Reports are to provide details of:

- any changes to the management regime for salmon and consequent changes to the Implementation Plan;
- actions that have been taken under the Implementation Plan in the previous year;
- significant changes to the status of stocks, and a report on catches; and
- actions taken in accordance with the provisions of the Convention

These reports will be reviewed by the Council. Please complete this form and return it to the Secretariat **by 1 April 2016**.

<b>Party:</b>	<b>European Union</b>
<b>Jurisdiction/Region:</b>	<b>UK (Northern Ireland)</b>

<b>1: Changes to the Implementation Plan</b>
<b>1.1 Describe any proposed revisions to the Implementation Plan</b> <i>(Where changes are proposed, the revised Implementation Plans should be submitted to the Secretariat by 1 December).</i>
None
<b>1.2 Describe any major new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation and management that you wish to highlight.</b>
Legislation now in place in the DCAL area to manage salmon exploitation and prevent the taking of salmon from rivers not meeting their MTs.

<b>2: Stock status and catches.</b>
<b>2.1 Provide a description of any new factors which may significantly affect the abundance of salmon stocks and, if there has been any significant change in stock status since the development of the Implementation Plan, provide a brief (200 word max) summary of these changes.</b>

<b>2.2 Provide the following information on catches:(nominal catch equals reported quantity of salmon caught and retained in tonnes ‘round fresh weight’ (i.e. weight of whole, ungutted, unfrozen fish) or ‘round fresh weight equivalent’).</b>				
(a) provisional nominal catch (which may be subject to revision) for 2015 (tonnes)	In-river	Estuarine	Coastal	Total
	4.5	0	0	4.5
(b) confirmed nominal catch of salmon for 2014 (tonnes)	2.4	0	0	2.4
(c) estimated unreported catch for 2015 (tonnes)	0.1	0	0	0.1
(d) number and percentage of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries in 2015.	DCAL Area 2015 C&R salmon ( 98 %) Loughs Agency Area N/A			

### 3: Implementation Plan Actions.

#### 3.1 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to the Management of Salmon Fisheries (Section 2.8 of the Implementation Plan).

*Note: The reports under ‘Progress on Action to Date’ should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.*

<b>Action F1:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	New legislation introduced in 2014 currently prohibits commercial netting for salmon unless a series of management criteria have been met. These criteria endorse the NASCO precautionary approach to salmon management as outlined in NASCO paper CNL(09)43 and only permit exploitation on stocks which are consistently above their MT and which have an identifiable surplus. A technical panel meets annually to determine stock status, MT attainment and to advise on potential fishing activity. Currently management criteria are not being attained and all commercial fisheries are closed in the DCAL area.  No commercial salmon licences have been issued since 2010 in the Loughs Agency area and are contained in the Foyle Area (Control of Fishing) Regulations 2010 <a href="http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/199/regulation/3/made">http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/199/regulation/3/made</a> .
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	No commercial mixed stock fishery permitted on stocks which are below MT.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	New legislation is now in place for the DCAL area to control the commercial harvesting of salmon based on assessment of individual stocks contributing to the fishery.

	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	Ongoing. A Standing Scientific Committee on Salmon for the DCAL area has been established to review local stock status and report to DCAL on the status of salmon rivers and compliance with MTs.
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	Yes
<b>Action F2:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	New legislation introduced in 2014 prevents recreational fishing for salmon except for catch & release until a series of management criteria have been met. These criteria endorse the NASCO precautionary approach to salmon management as outlined in NASCO paper CNL(09)43 and only permit exploitation on stocks which are consistently above their MT and have an identifiable surplus. A technical panel meets annually to determine stock status, MT attainment and to advise on potential fishing activity.  Compulsory catch and release for the Rivers Foyle & Finn in the Loughs Agency area from 2010. Continued assessment of adult runs each year against derived management targets.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Reduce exploitation on stocks below CL
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	New legislation in place for the DCAL area to control the recreational harvesting of salmon based on assessment of individual river stocks.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	Ongoing. A Standing Scientific Committee on Salmon for the DCAL area has been established to review local stock status and report to DCAL on the status of salmon rivers and compliance with MTs.
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	Yes
<b>Action F3:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	Mandatory catch and release of all rod caught salmon before 1 <sup>st</sup> June in DCAL area to protect MSW stocks which tend to arrive early in the season. Numbers of MSW fish are low compared to historical data collected.  No commercial exploitation of salmon within the Loughs Agency area and catch and release operates on the Rivers Foyle & Finn, a notable MSW salmon river.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Reduced exploitation of MSW component
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	

	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	On going, some evidence from the Bush monitoring site indicates recent increases in MSW returns.
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	Yes
<b>Action F4:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	Fishery patrolling and enforcement activities.  Efficacy of conservation measures to be assessed on each catchment.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Prevention of illegal activity.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	Monitoring of compliance with legislation is carried out through planned patrols, response to reports of illegal activity, working with Private Water bailiffs etc. Patrols are carried out at various times during the working week, weekends and public holidays. There is also provision for the reporting of illegal activity outside of normal office hours. Enforcement staff can then respond to the information.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	On going
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	On going

<b>3.2 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to Habitat Protection and Restoration</b> (Section 3.4 of the Implementation Plan).		
<i>Note: The reports under 'Progress on Action to Date' should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.</i>		
<b>Action H1:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	A DCAL panel of fisheries experts assess all applications for hydro electric generation and applies DCAL powers relating to fish passage at weirs and utilising current Environment Agency guidelines. Loughs Agency and DCAL also advise NIEA on issues relating to salmon habitat protection. Hydro electric schemes require statutory licensing by the NIEA and consideration is given to fish passage issues at each site by setting limits on the amount of water that can be abstracted at any site. All associated river works are subject to assessment by DCAL, Loughs Agency and NIEA to ensure protection of the fisheries habitat present at the site. Compliance inspections by the statutory agencies and the assessment of monitoring returns are carried out by NIEA. NIEA have established an inter departmental working group on hydro schemes to review and update current protocols and procedures applied to determine Hydro scheme applications. Loughs Agency has commissioned research funded

		by Interreg IVA into the impact on fisheries of run of river hydros. Loughs Agency also has a set of guidelines for hydro applications received adopted from IFI.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Maximum possible consideration of fisheries and ecological issues for hydro schemes
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	NIEA have set up an interdepartmental working group on hydros to review and update current protocols and procedures used to grant permissions for hydros. As a result the Guidance on “Run of River Hydros” is being updated in conjunction with other Government Departments. Assessment of the impact on fisheries of water abstraction licensing and planning applications continued in 2015.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. ‘Not started’; ‘Ongoing’; ‘Completed’):	On going
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	On going
<b>Action H2:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	To reduce the impact of drainage/ other works. As statutory consultees DCAL and Loughs Agency provide fisheries advice to review and assess all works proposed. Advice is developed to ensure that works are carried out in such a manner as to protect habitat present or to mitigate potential impacts and /or seek opportunities to improve fish habitat / passage where possible at the sites where works are carried out.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Ensure sensitive / mitigated engineering solutions To seek opportunities to restore and enhance salmonid habitat within the impacted stretch
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	Assessment of the impact on fisheries of drainage and other works continued in 2015.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. ‘Not started’; ‘Ongoing’; ‘Completed’):	On going
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	No
<b>Action H3:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	Under the Water (Northern Ireland) Order 1999, the consent of NIEA is required to discharge any trade or sewage effluent into our waterways or underground strata. This includes any potentially polluting matter (including site drainage liable to contamination) from commercial, industrial or domestic premises to waterways or underground strata. Both DCAL and Loughs Agency are consulted on discharge consent applications and provide fisheries advice on them. NIEA also have

		responsibility for 1) Silage Slurry and Agricultural Fuel Oil (SSAFO), the EC Nitrates Directive, and Groundwater Authorisations and 2) authorise the deposit, treating, keeping or disposal of controlled waste on any land, or treatment or disposal of controlled waste by means of mobile plant.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Reduction in degradation of salmonid habitat through pollution or waste disposals
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	Detailed monitoring programmes were undertaken in 2014 for the complete range of parameters as required under the WFD. This now includes indicative classifications from NASCO fishing data and this information is utilised in the formulation of WFD programme of measures. Pro active engagement with stakeholders is carried out to prevent incidents occurring and procedures are in place to deal with incidents once they occur.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	On going
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	No
<b>Action H4:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	Inter-agency group to co-ordinate effort on river restoration and continuity issues has now been established and an inventory of connectivity issues will be drawn up and co-operation sought to address these impacts subject to funding and the access approvals in an agreed plan. Regular Inter agencies co-operation meetings are held, with stakeholder engagement, to identify, ground truth and address possible connectivity problems. Further research (through IBIS Interreg IVA funding & AFBI / DCAL) / monitoring has been commissioned to investigate specific anthropogenic impacts on connectivity.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	To improve connectivity by reducing the number of barriers to fish passage
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	Work to identify barriers still in progress for major salmon rivers. A report on the cumulative impact of small barriers on a Lough Foyle tributary was produced under the IBIS project. The IBIS studies are currently being written up and will be available in autumn 2016.  A range of habitat improvement works were carried out on the following rivers in 2015 – Sixmile, Bush , Main, Shimna, Doora, Earls & Bannagh - addition of spawning gravels. Holding pools were created on the Glenshesk river. Rubble mats were installed on the

		Ballycassidy, Earls & Ballinamallard rivers. Plans for habitat improvements have also been drawn up for the Burren and Glen rivers in the SE. A fish barrier was removed from the Colin Glen river at Jubilee park.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	On going
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	No
<b>Action H5:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	Protection against illegal impacts on salmonid habitat by carrying out regular patrols to identify and investigate breaches of fishery legislation e.g. removal of spawning gravels, unauthorised removal of material from the river bed etc. Routine patrols of rivers are carried out by enforcement staff from DCAL and the Loughs Agency and regular liaison / communication with angling clubs and the general public to identify habitat impacts. To create a public awareness campaign on the impacts of the removal of salmon habitat on salmon stocks. Consents to remove material from the river bed require authorisation from the statutory authorities.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	Reduction in illegal alterations of salmonid habitat. Increase the education of landowners on the negative impacts of the loss of habitat for salmon stocks.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	A new interagency guidance information booklet has been completed on the necessary legal requirements for those working in or near rivers. This has been published and distributed to the public.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	On going
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	No
<b>Action H6:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	To survey all outstanding principle salmon rivers within the region and to produce an overall inventory of current and potential salmon habitat. We will seek to work with partners in the Republic of Ireland (ROI) to complete these within cross border catchments.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	To have surveyed all the major salmon rivers within NI and to have salmon habitat inventory data on a GIS database. This will help to assess the quality and quantity of salmon habitat and identify habitat bottlenecks. This information will then be used to inform where habitat management, refurbishment and enhancement works are required. All Loughs

		Agency major river systems have been surveyed and the information is on GIS.
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	A salmon habitat survey was initiated on the Agivey river (DCAL area) in 2015.
	Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	On going
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	No

### 3.3 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to Aquaculture, Introductions and Transfers and Transgenics (Section 4.8 of the Implementation Plan).

*Note: The reports under 'Progress on Action to Date' should provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress made. While referring to additional material (e.g. via links to websites) may assist those seeking more detailed information, this will not be evaluated by the Review Group.*

<b>Action A1:</b>	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP):	Completion of a research project by AFBI/DARD aimed to; a) monitor sea lice levels in a single wild Northern Irish salmon stock (River Bush), and b) determine the level of genetic introgression of escaped aquaculture salmon on the wild salmon stocks of Northern Ireland.
	Expected Outcome (as submitted in the IP):	An assessment of sea lice levels in a wild salmon stock in Northern Ireland. An assessment of the level of genetic introgression from salmon of aquaculture origin in the wild stocks in Northern Ireland
	Progress on Action to Date (see note above):	When compared to similar studies in the peer-reviewed literature, it appears that the number of sea lice on adult spawners returning to the River Bush is below what has been reported elsewhere. However, sea lice infestation in stocks other than the River Bush and life stages other than the returning adults were not investigated in this study, and therefore remain unknown.  In addition authorities have monitored sealice numbers on farmed stock for 6 years and data indicates low infestations. Details for the last 2 years are shown in the table below and monitoring will continue.

Date	No. Of fish Checked	No. Of positives (total lice seen)	Percentage fish infected	Number of Lice/Fish		
				1	2	3
11/11/2015	380	1	0.20%	Max		
28/10/2015	355	5	1.40%	Max		
09/09/2015	400	5	1.20%	Max		
26/08/2015	204	0	0.00%			
22/07/2015	373	3	0.80%	Max		
10/06/2015	321	4	1.20%	Max		
20/05/2015	360	4	1.10%	Max		
15/04/2015	345	10	2.80%	Max		
18/02/2015	425	1	0.20%	Max		
21/01/2015	302	1	0.30%	Max		
03/12/2014	259	4	1.50%	Max		
12/11/2014	199	4	2.00%	Max		
08/10/2014	364	3	0.80%	Max		
03/09/2014	471	7	1.50%	Max		
09/07/2014	287	0	0.00%			
25/06/2014	333	1	0.30%	Max		
21/05/2014	410	0	0.00%			
30/04/2014	674	14	2.10%	Max		
19/02/2014	435	20	4.60%	Max		
15/01/2014	424	22	5.20%	Max		

The detection of 2.6% to 6.7% of farm origin genetic signals in wild salmon juveniles across a sample of rivers in NI indicates the presence of the genetic signature of farmed salmon at juvenile stages (fry/parr) and that escaped farmed fish have successfully bred in some rivers, though at a relatively low level. Importantly the finding of second generation back crosses between farmed and wild salmon, albeit at low level, is of significance because it shows that there may be a longer persistence of the genetic effect of interbreeding between wild and farmed salmon.

Current Status of Action (e.g. 'Not started'; 'Ongoing'; 'Completed'):	Completed
If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	Yes

<b>4: Additional information required under the Convention</b>
4.1 Details of any laws, regulations and programmes that have been adopted or repealed since the last notification.
New Salmon Conservation legislation supports the precautionary management of salmon stocks in the DCAL area. The legislation prohibits the harvest of salmon by commercial fishing unless all rivers affected consistently attain their MTs and ensures default catch & release for recreational fishing except where a river consistently attains MT.
4.2 Details of any new commitments concerning the adoption or maintenance in force for specified periods of time of conservation, restoration and other management measures.
4.3 Details of any new actions to prohibit fishing for salmon beyond 12 nautical miles.
4.4 Details of any new actions to invite the attention of States not Party to the Convention to matters relating to the activities of its vessels which could adversely affect salmon stocks subject to the Convention.
4.5 Details of any actions taken to implement regulatory measures under Article 13 of the Convention including imposition of adequate penalties for violations.