



Agenda Item 6.1  
For Information

**Council**

**CNL(14)27**

***Annual Progress Report  
on Actions Taken Under Implementation Plans for the Calendar Year 2013***

***EU – UK (Northern Ireland)***



CNL(14)27

*Annual Progress Report on Actions taken under Implementation Plans for the Calendar Year 2013*

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 2014**.

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

**1: Changes to the Implementation Plan**

**1.1 Describe any proposed revisions to the Implementation Plan and, where appropriate, provide a revised plan.**

**H4 – Amendment to stated object “to improve fish passage”. This may include removal of barriers or improving passage for fish at the site.**

**1.2 Describe any major new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation and management that you wish to highlight.**

**Ban on sale of rod caught salmon by anglers in place for 2013 season in the DCAL area. On going public consultation over methods allowed for catch and release for salmon in the DCAL area. Final conservation arrangements agreed with the Minister to be put in place for 2014 season.**

**2: Stock status and catches.**

**2.1 Provide a description of any significant changes in the status of stocks relative to the reference points described in the Implementation Plan and of any new factors which may significantly affect the abundance of salmon stocks.**

**Slight overall increase in % compliance with Cls for some coastal rivers monitored in the DCAL area.  
Loughs Agency area overall slight increase in compliance with CLs, however the R Finn still remains below CL.**

| <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> |  |           |         |       |
|---|--|-----------|---------|-------|
|   | In-river   | Estuarine | Coastal | Total |
| (a) provisional nominal catch (which may be subject to revision) for 2013 (tonnes)  | 5.8  | 0         | 0       | 5.8   |
| (b) confirmed nominal catch of salmon for 2012 (tonnes)   | 9.0  | 0         | 0       | 9.0   |
| (c) estimated unreported catch for 2013 (tonnes)  | 0.3  | 0         | 0       | 0.3   |
| (d) number and percentage of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries in 2013.  | DCAL area – 755 = 87% of total catch<br>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)

| Action     | Description of Action:          |  |
|------------|---------------------------------|--|
| <b>F1:</b> |                                 | <p>A voluntary cessation of remaining commercial mixed stock commercial salmon fisheries was obtained in 2012 in the DCAL area and this continued for the 2013 season. Legislation will be in place for the DCAL area by 2014 which will prevent commercial netting for salmon until a series of criteria have been met. These criteria have been drafted as part of the legislation process and will only permit exploitation on stocks which are consistently above their CL and have an identifiable surplus. A technical panel will meet to determine this and to decide on other restrictions on how the fishery would operate for e.g. quotas etc.</p> <p>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<br/><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>.</p> |
|            | Expected Outcome:               | No commercial mixed stock fishery permitted on stocks which are below CL.  |
|            | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | Voluntary cessation of commercial netting in 2013 season and regular patrols carried out confirmed no activity.<br>LA no commercial netting.   |
|            | Ongoing/completed:              | On going - New legislation agreed by the Minister and due to be in place for 2014 season.  |
|            | Achieved objective?             | Yes  |

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| <b>Action F2:</b> | Description of Action:          | <p>Voluntary catch and release requested in the DCAL area for 2012 and 2013. Compulsory catch &amp; release on salmon rivers in the Public Angling Estate (PAE) in the DCAL area. Figures compiled to date indicate that there has been a good response to this request with catch &amp; release for recreational angling 62% in 2012 and around 87% in 2013. Legislation will be in place for the DCAL area for the 2014 season which will introduce mandatory catch &amp; release for salmon until a series of criteria have been met. These criteria have now been approved by the DCAL minister as part of the legislation process and will be put before the NI assembly in 2014. This will only permit exploitation on stocks which are consistently above their CL and have an identifiable surplus. A technical panel will meet to determine this and to decide on other restrictions on how the fishery would operate.</p> <p>Compulsory catch and release for the River Finn in the Loughs Agency area from 2010. Continued assessment of adult runs each year against derived management targets.</p> <p>Further salmon conservation measures for the Loughs Agency area were considered and a public consultation was held. Consideration being given to results of the consultation for the 2014 season.</p> |
|                   | Expected Outcome:               | Reduce exploitation on stocks below CL  |
|                   | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | <p>Voluntary catch and release in the DCAL area in 2013 season and regular enforcement patrols carried. Significant number of anglers complied with the voluntary catch &amp; release.</p> <p>Compulsory catch &amp; release in the Loughs Agency area for the River Finn.</p>  |
|                   | Ongoing/completed:              | <p>On going – new legislation agreed by the Minister and due in place for 2014 season which will only allow salmon to be taken from rivers in the DCAL area consistently above their CL.</p> <p>In Loughs Agency area salmon only allowed to be taken from rivers above CL which have met their MTs.</p>  |
|                   | Achieved objective?             | Yes   |
| <b>Action F3:</b> | Description of Action:          | <p>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 have increased slightly and this may be evidence of the success of the management measures taken. A scientific review of the age structure, run timing and the efficacy of early season exploitation controls will be undertaken.</p> <p>The number of MSW fish that could be taken by anglers was considered as part of a wider public consultation held in 2013 to review the conservation measures for salmon in the Loughs Agency area.</p>   |
|                   | Expected Outcome:               | Reduced exploitation of MSW component.  |

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|                   | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | Only one detection in the DCAL area for an angler taking a single MSW fish before 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2013. Regular enforcement patrols carried out.   |
|                   | Ongoing/completed:              | On going  |
|                   | Achieved objective?             | Yes   |
| <b>Action F4:</b> | Description of Action:          | Fishery patrolling and enforcement activities. Efficacy of conservation measures to be assessed on each catchment.  |
|                   | Expected Outcome:               | Prevention of illegal activity.   |
|                   | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | Patrols regularly carried out in both the DCAL & Loughs Agency areas to detect illegal activity including nets etc. One detection of illegal poaching of salmon in the DCAL area. In the Loughs Agency area 131 nets seized and 172 illegally caught salmon seized. |
|                   | Ongoing/completed:              | On going  |
|                   | Achieved objective?             | Partial   |

**3.2 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to Habitat Protection and Restoration (section 3.4 of the Implementation Plan)**

|                   |                                 |  |
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| <b>Action H1:</b> | Description of Action:          | 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 the NIEA. Guidance on “Run of River Hydros” is available on the NIEA website. 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:               | Maximum possible consideration of fisheries and ecological issues for hydro schemes  |
|                   | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | Index river in the DCAL river, which has a number of small scale hydros on it, will be subject to a scientific monitoring programme in 2014 to assess the potential impact on juvenile abundance and migratory behaviour of adults in the dewatered stretch. Research project in the Loughs Agency area small scale hydros is still on going   |

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|                   |                                 | due to report 2015.  |
|                   | Ongoing/completed:              | On going   |
|                   | Achieved objective?             | On going   |
| <b>Action H2:</b> | Description of Action:          | 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:               | Ensure sensitive / mitigated engineering solutions<br>To seek opportunities to restore and enhance salmonid habitat within the impacted stretch  |
|                   | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | Maintenance schemes are checked post works to ensure compliance with fisheries advice. Some salmonid habitat improvements projects were carried out in conjunction with maintenance works on some rivers in the DCAL area. Habitat improvement works were carried out on selected areas of the following rivers: Bush, Flesk, Enler and Ballygawley.   |
|                   | Ongoing/completed:              | On going   |
|                   | Achieved objective?             | Yes  |
| <b>Action H3:</b> | Description of Action:          | 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:               | Reduction in degradation of salmonid habitat through pollution or waste disposals  |
|                   | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | Detailed monitoring programmes are ongoing for the complete range of parameters as required under the Water Framework Directive. This now includes indicative WFD classifications from NASCO fishing data and this information is utilised in the formulation of WFD programmes of Measures where necessary. NIEA take steps to prevent incidents from happening, or minimises the effect of pollution on the environment once an  |

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|                   |                                 | incident has happened. It also meets with both the public and industry, offering advice on pollution prevention, and promoting good environmental practices. Where pollution incidents occur NIEA will seek to trace them and take enforcement action. Catchment stakeholder meetings are held regularly as part of the WFD and pollution incidents or issues are reported at these meetings.  |
|                   | Ongoing/completed:              | On going   |
|                   | Achieved objective?             | On going   |
| <b>Action H4:</b> | Description of Action:          | 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:               | To improve connectivity by improving fish passage. This may include removal of the barrier or improving fish passage at the site.  |
|                   | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | A programme of work has been initiated to identify structures on major salmon rivers. This has been completed on the Six mile river. Two barriers under consideration for removal subject to the necessary funding and approvals.  |
|                   | Ongoing/completed:              | On going   |
|                   | Achieved objective?             | On going   |
| <b>Action H5</b>  | Description of Action:          | 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:               | Reduction in illegal alterations of salmonid habitat. Increase the education of landowners on the negative impacts of the loss of habitat for salmon stocks.   |



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|                  | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | Produced an advisory leaflet in the DCAL area and the River Restoration & Continuity group have produced a river morphology advisory handbook for the public as to the permissions required to work in rivers.   |
|                  | Ongoing/completed:              | On going   |
|                  | Achieved objective?             | On going   |
| <b>Action H6</b> | Description of Action:          | 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:               | 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. |
|                  | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | Salmon habitat assessed for the Inver and Glynn rivers and CLs established. Habitat improvement works were carried out on selected areas of the following rivers: Glendun, Glenarm, Moyola, Main, Six milewater.   |
|                  | Ongoing/completed:              | On going – habitat surveys planned for the Glenarm and Kilkeel rivers for 2014.  |
|                  | Achieved objective?             | On going   |

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

|                   |                                 |   |
|-------------------|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>Action A1:</b> | Description of Action:          | Initiation of a research project by 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:               | 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   |
|                   | Monitoring/Enforcement Results: | Both sets of data collected in 2013 analysis will be carried out in 2014.   |
|                   | Ongoing/completed:              | On going  |
|                   | Achieved objective?             | On going  |

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| <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.   |
| <b>Ban on the sale of rod caught salmon in the DCAL area brought in on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2013.</b>   |
| 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.  |
| <b>None</b>   |
| 4.3 Details of any new actions to prohibit fishing for salmon beyond 12 nautical miles.   |
| <b>None</b>   |
| 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. |
| <b>None</b>   |
| 4.5 Details of any actions taken to implement regulatory measures under Article 13 of the Convention including imposition of adequate penalties for violations.   |
| None  |