



Agenda item 6.3
For information

Council

CNL(17)34

***Annual Progress Report
on Actions Taken Under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2016***

EU – UK (Northern Ireland)

CNL(17)34

Annual Progress Report on Actions taken under the Implementation Plan for the Calendar Year 2016

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 **no later than 24 March 2017**.

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

1: Changes to the Implementation Plan
1.1 Describe any proposed revisions to the Implementation Plan <i>(Where changes are proposed, the revised Implementation Plans should be submitted to the Secretariat by 1 December).</i>
In response to comments received through the NASCO review process of Implementation plan annual reports, it is intended to revise the UK(NI) version before the 1 st of December 2017. The revision will provide a fuller reflection of salmon management work undertaken within the region, more concisely capture the main objectives for the management of wild salmon, review the threats to wild salmon and the challenges to their management and provide further clarity on the actions taken under the sections.
1.2 Describe any major new initiatives or achievements for salmon conservation and management that you wish to highlight.

2: Stock status and catches.
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.
Returns of salmon, particularly the 1SW component, exhibited considerable improvement in the DAERA area of N. Ireland in 2016. The returns of salmon through the fish counter

on the largest river in the DAERA area (Lower Bann) represented a 20 year high with a total count of 15,936 salmon, exceeding the long term average (1997-2015) of 4,000-6,000 salmon.				
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’).				
(a) provisional nominal catch (which may be subject to revision) for 2016 (tonnes)	In-river 4.9t	Estuarine 0	Coastal 0	Total 4.9t
(b) confirmed nominal catch of salmon for 2015 (tonnes)	2.9 t	0	0	2.9t
(c) estimated unreported catch for 2016 (tonnes)	0	0	0	0
(d) number and percentage of salmon caught and released in recreational fisheries in 2016	93% (DAERA area)			

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.

Action F1:	Description of Action (as submitted in the IP)	<p>A voluntary cessation of remaining commercial mixed stock commercial salmon fisheries was obtained in 2012 in the DCAL area and discussions are underway to repeat this 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 are currently being drafted as part of the legislation process and will only permit exploitation on stocks which are 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 http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2010/199/regulation/3/made.</p>
	Expected Outcome	No commercial mixed stock fishery permitted on

	<i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	stocks which are below CL.
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	No commercial licences to harvest salmon have been issued in both the DAERA & LA areas in 2016. Given the mixed stock nature of these fisheries higher MTs have been set for any rivers affected by commercial activity. Rivers stocks contributing to the fishery must meet their MTs consistently before consideration would be given to allow commercial fishing activity to recommence. This criteria is also defined in the legislation. A scientific committee meets annually to assess the data collected on adult fish stock assessment data, juvenile electrofishing data and rod catches for the major salmon rivers in the DAERA area and their compliance with MTs or CLs and the position is similar in the LA area.
	Current Status of Action	Completed for Current Year
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F2:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	<p>Voluntary catch and release requested in the DCAL area for 2012 and 2013. Compulsory catch & release on salmon rivers in the PAE in the DCAL area. Figures compiled to date indicate that there has been a good response to this request with catch & release for recreational angling 22% in 2011 and around 60% in 2012. Legislation will be in place for the DCAL area by 2014 which will prevent recreational fishing for salmon except for catch & release until a series of criteria have been met. These criteria are currently being drafted as part of the legislation process and will only permit exploitation on stocks which are 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 now under public consultation.</p>
	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Reduce exploitation on stocks below CL
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	Legislation now in place in the across NI & Cross border catchments in the LA area, which restricts recreational harvesting of salmon by anglers only to those rivers meeting their MTs. For those rivers not meeting their MTs catch and release applies. Only the

		<p>identified surplus may be harvested in rivers meeting their MTs in the DAERA area and in the LA stocks are managed in real time which controls exploitation if MTs are not met in season. In 2016 only 3 rivers were open for harvesting in the DAERA area – L Melvin (cross border catchment), Glenarm River & the Clady River. In the LA area all rivers were open except the Finn (cross border catchment) which remains as catch & release.</p> <p>This criteria is also defined in the legislation. A scientific committee meets annually to assess the data collected on adult stock assessment data, juvenile electrofishing data and rod catches for the major salmon rivers in the DAERA area and their compliance with MTs and the position is similar in the LA area.</p>
	Current Status of Action	Completed for Current Year
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F3:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	<p>Mandatory catch and release of all rod caught salmon before 1st 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. A scientific review of the age structure, run timing and the efficacy of early season exploitation controls will be undertaken.</p> <p>Public consultation underway to review exploitation of MSW stocks in the Loughs Agency area.</p>
	Expected Outcome <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Reduced exploitation of MSW component
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	<p>No exploitation of MSW stocks is permitted in the DAERA area by the legislation currently in place irrespective of whether rivers are meeting their MTs or not. It is compulsory catch and release for any salmon caught prior to the 1st of June. In the cross border Melvin catchment exploitation of MSW fish is permitted but is controlled by an annual tag allocation which is based on the available surplus identified.</p> <p>In the Loughs Agency area the main MSW fishery is the cross border river Finn which is subject to catch & release only and has been since 2010. MSW fish exploitation is allowed in the remainder of the LA area but is subject to a maximum allocation of 5 tags per angler for the retention of either salmon or sea trout over 40cm</p>
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing

	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action F4:	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 (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	Organised patrols (on land and water) are carried out in both the DAERA and LA areas to deter, disrupt and detect illegal fishing activities. Operational patrol targets are set and monitored and the numbers of detections are recorded in each area. In 2016 in the DAERA area no detections were made re the illegal capture of salmon and no illegal caught salmon were seized. In the LA area 33 successful prosecutions were made. 26 illegally captured salmon and 135 seizures were made.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If 'Completed', has the Action achieved its objective?	

3.2 Provide an update on progress against actions relating to Habitat Protection and Restoration (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>		
Action H1:	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 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

	<i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	ecological issues for hydro schemes
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	All water abstraction applications for hydro sites received by the NIEA are reviewed by a technical assessment panel. They consider its impact on fisheries including the depleted stretch, fish passage and screening arrangements at the site. This year 12 applications have been reviewed and fisheries advice provided. NIEA set the licence conditions including abstraction volume and a higher Q value is used for salmonid rivers to provide additional protection during abstraction periods. A scientific assessment of the impact of water abstraction on fish densities in depleted stretches has commenced with a number of pre installation assessments carried out at these sites to provide baseline data. Monitoring of fish stocks will be ongoing at these sites over the next few years.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action H2:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	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 <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Ensure sensitive / mitigated engineering solutions To seek opportunities to restore and enhance salmonid habitat within the impacted stretch
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	DAERA and LA are both statutory consultees for the drainage maintenance works programme carried out by Rivers Agency and quarterly meetings are held with them to discuss the ongoing maintenance programme. Fisheries advice was provided on the proposed works to ensure protection of fish stocks at the sites for the 2016 river drainage maintenance works programme. In addition the following habitat enhancement works were carried out as part of the programme: Ballymartin River – Fish pass and 2 x gravel / nursery areas created Glenshesk River – 4 x adult holding areas created Colebrooke River - 1 x nursery units Tempo River – 1 x Nursery units
	Current Status of Action	Completed for Current Year

	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action H3:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	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 <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	Reduction in degradation of salmonid habitat through pollution or waste disposals
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	The SSAFO Regulations were incorporated into the 2014 Nitrates Action Programme Regulations, with scheduled inspections carried out on 278 farms in 2016 to assess compliance and water pollution risk. NIEA also carried out approximately 1800 investigations in relation to reports of water pollution. Further actions were taken as appropriate. All discharges are regulated and fisheries advice is provided on them as part of the planning application process. In addition, a 'Fish Kill Protocol' was developed by NIEA and introduced in 2016 to allow a co-ordinated, structured response to reported fish mortalities. This defined responsibilities and refined procedure to improve the investigation of unknown pollutants.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	

Action H4:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	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 <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	To improve connectivity by reducing the number of barriers to fish passage
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	<p>Habitat improvements works have been carried out on the following rivers in the DAERA area:</p> <p>Garvary River – 8 x spawning and nursery units</p> <p>River Braid – 4 x full habitat units (Spawning, nursery & holding areas)</p> <p>Sixmile water – 2 x full habitat units, large boulders placed at a site to improve parr holding & 30 tonnes of gravel added to the upper reaches to improve spawning areas</p> <p>River Bush – weed clearance form spawning areas for 2kn stretch – high number of redds recorded in these areas</p> <p>Four mile burn – 40 tonnes of gravel added to the upper reaches to improve spawning areas</p> <p>River Lagan – Spawning gravel added to site</p> <p>Shimna River – Nursery & gravel substrate added to upper reaches to improve both spawning / juvenile areas</p> <p>3 Mile Water -</p> <p>Fish barrier works were carried out on the following rivers;</p> <p>Waterfoot river – removal of fish barrier</p> <p>Moyola River – fish pass provided at historical hydro site</p> <p>Habitat improvement works were undertaken in the Loughs Agency area on the following rivers:</p> <p>Quiggery Water - bankside enhancement and protection including fencing</p> <p>Owenkillew – bankside protection and enhancement</p> <p>Cummirk – instream enhancement</p> <p>Finn – bankside fencing</p>

		<p>Altnahree – bankside fencing, gravel cleaning, cattle drinkers and stiles Faughan – riparian fencing Owenreagh – instream works and bank protection Glencurry Burn – instream enhancement Glenedra – riparian tree planting</p> <p>The IBIS PhD study on small scale hydro schemes and fish was completed in 2016 and will be published in 2017.</p>
	Current Status of Action	Completed for Current Year
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action H5:	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 (Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)	Organised patrols (on land and water) are carried out in both the DAERA and LA areas to deter, disrupt and detect illegal activities including the unauthorised removal of material from the river bed. Operational patrol targets are set and monitored and the numbers of detections are recorded in each area. In 2016 in the DAERA area no detections were made re the illegal removal of river bed material. Any proposed removal of material from the river bed requires an authorisation. In 2016 the following applications were received and assessed for permission to remove material from the river bed - DAERA area122 & and LA area 53. Note where this has a detrimental impact on fish stocks permission to remove the material is not given.
	Current Status of Action	Ongoing

	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	
Action H6:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	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 <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	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.
	Progress on Action to Date <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	All primary rivers have now been surveyed for salmon habitat and CLs established on them.
	Current Status of Action	Completed
	If Completed, has the Action achieved its objective?	Yes

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.

Action A1:	Description of Action <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	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 <i>(as submitted in the IP)</i>	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 <i>(Provide a brief overview with a quantitative measure of progress. Other material (e.g. website links) will not be evaluated.)</i>	An assessment of sea lice burden on the R Bush adults returning to the river takes place annually and results for 2016 indicated that of 3332 salmon inspected 91% had no sea lice, 6% had a low levels of sea lice and 3% had moderate levels of sea lice. The data for years preceding this time period are currently being collated and reviewed and a time series of data will be compiled for next year.

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.
N/A	
4.3	Details of any new actions to prohibit fishing for salmon beyond 12 nautical miles.
N/A	
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.
N/A	
4.5	Details of any actions taken to implement regulatory measures under Article 13 of the Convention including imposition of adequate penalties for violations.
N/A	