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fin fisheries ireland news

Fisheries Ireland
Our Natural Heritage

The Newsletter for the Central & Regional Fisheries Boards
Irisleabhar an Phríomh Bhord Iascaigh agus na Boird Iascaigh Réigiúnach

New Course Will Set Standards for Inland Fisheries Management

A new Certificate course on Inland Fisheries Management was launched by Mr. John Browne, Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. The course, for serving fisheries personnel, was developed on a partnership basis by the Institute of Technology Sligo and the Fisheries Boards, to give a new impetus and focus to the conservation and management of inland fisheries in Ireland. 16 students from across the Regional Fisheries Boards were selected to attend the course. Students will study at the Institute of Technology Sligo on a block-release system over an 18-month period, broken into three blocks of 11 weeks, where students will attend the classes at the Institute. The summer semester will be spent in the field working on projects.

The course will cover all aspects of work in the fisheries service including Fisheries Law and Enforcement, Fish Biology, Environmental Studies, Boat Handling, Health and Safety, Law, Fisheries Development & Management and I.T. & Communications. It is designed to supplement the work and experience of Fisheries Board staff.

Bill McLysaght, Chairman of the Central Fisheries Board said, *"This is an exciting new venture for the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards and we look forward to the future with confidence. We are developing and growing as a quality service provider."*

Pat Timpson, Head of the School of Science at the Institute of Technology, Sligo welcomed this initiative by the Fisheries Boards *"We have been providing environmental science courses at diploma and degree level for more than 20 years and we are gratified that this Institute was selected to provide this excellent fisheries management course."*

"This is an exciting new venture for the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards and we look forward to the future with confidence."

The course is part of a wider staff development and modernisation programme in line with the national social partnership agreements and is consistent with the government's strategic management initiative for the Public Service. The Fisheries Boards fully support their staff in attending the course. Participation in the course will be broadened over time and included in the CAO.

The Fisheries Boards have a strong commitment to the development and training of their staff and this course is just one of the many programmes identified as business needs in the 2003/2004 Training Plan. Other programmes include Conflict Resolution training, Performance Management & Development System Training, Health & Safety Programmes such as First Aid, Manual Handling, Fire Safety, Water Safety, etc., Key Skills training in areas such as Expert Witness training, Boat Handling, Communications & I.T. training, and Management Development training to name but a few.

Pictured with the Minister of State for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources John Browne, TD are John O'Connor, Chief Executive of the Central Fisheries Board and the first intake of students for the Inland Fisheries Management course at Sligo Institute of Technology

Rinus Hage with a lovely John Dory from Brandon Bay. Taken from the 2003 ISFC Annual report, details inside.

The inaugural group of 16 students are:
Joe Delaney, ERFB
Feargal Caffrey, ERFB
PJ Doran, SRFB
Michael Byron, SRFB
Sean Moran, SWRFB
Karl Houston, SWRFB
John Devaney, ShRFB
Dermot Broughan, ShRFB
Walter Butler, WRFB
Frank Reilly, WRFB
Micky Thornton, NWRFB
John Burke, NWRFB
Kieran Jennings, NWRFB
Ted Sweeney, NRFB
Cornelius McMullan, NRFB
Hugh Gillespie, NRFB

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Editorial

2004 promises to be an exciting year for the Inland Fisheries Sector. The outcome of the Review is to be available by the Summer and will hopefully answer some major questions for Inland Fisheries. There are also many interesting projects planned by the Boards for the coming year, which we shall cover in future issues.

The development of ***access for all*** fisheries by the Boards is progressing well, as can be seen from our feature article, with both new and upgraded venues opening each year. The Boards are very aware of the demand for such venues, not just for those in wheelchairs but all anglers who have difficulty in accessing the water. In advancing ***access for all*** fisheries, the Boards are seeking to work with local communities and specialist organisations to ensure full integration.

The new Inland Fisheries Course in Sligo Institute of Technology is a major and exciting event in the history of Fisheries. This long awaited course will enable staff to develop their skills and have them academically recognised. It will also enable the Boards to provide an enhanced service to its customers and over time will provide an avenue for those Leaving Certificate students interested in pursing a career in Fishery Management to acquire an academic qualification. It will also enable those members of the public interested in the sector such as angling clubs and fishery owners to do likewise.

As always, we welcome any suggestions or contributions you wish to make and I would like to thank all who contributed articles and photographs to this issue.

Eamon Cusack
Editor

Inland Fisheries Review

The previously announced Review of the Inland Fisheries Sector and the States policy in this area has commenced, with phase 1 due for completion by the end of March. Submissions to the consultants FGS have been made by all interested groups and public meetings were also held.

Newsbriefs

Killarney Conference on Sustainable Tourism

The South Western Regional Authority (SWRA) and the South Western Regional Fisheries Board (SWRFB) are jointly involved in a European programme called the European Salmon Tour. The purpose of this tour is to share information among countries that currently have or had a salmon fishing or angling tradition. These countries include Sweden, Norway, Finland, Wales, Ireland and Spain. The first tour took place last year on the Clareviln River in Sweden and was attended by representatives from the SWRA and the SWRFB.

The tour then held a conference on Sustainable Tourism, which took place in Killarney. Representatives from all countries attended with approximately 100 delegates from Ireland and further afield. The next part of the tour will focus on the economic importance of salmon and is due to be held in late spring 2004.

Safety Day for the SWRFB

The SWRFB held a safety day to heighten safety awareness among staff. This is their second safety day, which focused on inland water safety and weils disease. It also included a welfare element with talks on PRSA's and savings for retirement. A question time was held with teams from Cork and Kerry battling for supremacy.

From left: John O'Connor (CFB), Greg Forde (WRFB) and Isaac Ferrus (SRFB) at the CFB Annual Golf Classic.

Fisheries Board Team wins Allergan Interfirms Golf Competition

The Fisheries Board team won the Allergan Interfirms Golf Competition in Westport during the summer. From left the team was Willie Roche (CFB), Michael Hennessy (SWRFB), Dave Ferson (Chairman of Allergan Sea Angling Club), Norman Dunlop and Joe Caffrey (both CFB).

Juvenile Anglers catch 15 salmon on Moy

As part of its policy of promoting angling among the younger generation, the North Western Regional Fisheries Board held a very successful day for juveniles on the Cathedral Beat on the Moy.

The youngsters ranging in age from five to sixteen were each given an opportunity to fish the famous beat. Despite the time constraint, ideal conditions for worm fishing resulted in fifteen salmon being caught.

Daniel Gorman, winner of the best fish and best bag, pictured at the Cathedral Beat on the Moy.

Each young angler fished under the guidance and supervision of a Fisheries Board staff member with some parents also lending a hand.

The youngest captor was five- year old Kieran Lally, Ballina, who caught a 4lb salmon while the overall winner, was Daniel Gorman, Ballina who landed a fish weighing 5.86lbs. Philip Thornton, Ballina was second with a fish of 5.61lbs. Two young brothers from England both managed to catch their first salmon within minutes of each other while their father looked on with disbelief and commented that it had taken him years to catch his first!

A highly successful day was rounded off with refreshments and presentation of prizes in the Ridge Pool Hotel.

Value of Wild Salmon in Ireland

The Central Fisheries Board published an independent report evaluating the contribution of wild salmon to the Irish economy. The report, 'An Economic / Socio-Economic Evaluation of Wild Salmon in Ireland' analyses both the commercial and tourism angling sectors and makes recommendations on how Ireland's wild salmon resource can best be managed in the future. All recommendations in the report, produced by Indecon International Economic Consultants, are based on the need for long-term sustainable management of wild salmon stocks to optimise the economic and socio-economic benefits.

The report found that the advantage on economic / socio-economic grounds can best be achieved through a rebalancing of wild salmon exploitation from the commercial fisheries towards tourism angling. Indecon's recommendations are based on the requirement that wild salmon exploitation must occur within the context of first meeting stock conservation requirements.

Fisheries Board Staff member, John McNee helps juvenile angler Owen Devaney ashore with his catch safely in the net

The principal recommendations include:

- The Consultants do not recommend the ending of commercial salmon fishing but believe the level of catch should be aligned with sustainable development.
- A rebalancing of exploitation between commercial and angling sectors should be achieved by one or more of the following incentives:
  - Implementation of appropriate reduction in commercial salmon catch through revision in commercial quotas and restriction of new entrants.
  - Continued support for set-aside schemes at local level within the commercial sector.
  - Reduction of commercial salmon fishing through introduction of voluntary buy-out programme.
- Policy consideration should be given to a single stock approach to exploitation as a priority.
- Appropriate river management structures relating to tourist angling availability and access should be put in place.
- Development agencies should actively assist fishermen in securing opportunities in related sectors.

Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources John Browne TD, requested on its launch that a comprehensive consultation process with the sector be undertaken on the report and its recommendations. Interested parties were invited to provide their comments by way of a questionnaire or the making of a submission or statement. Meeting with interested groups were held throughout the country. To date 361 written responses have been received and it is foreseen that the services of an outside expert will be engaged to analyse the responses.

Pictured at the launch of the Indecon Report are (left to right), Harry Lloyd, CEO of the Northern Regional Fisheries Board, John O'Connor, Chief Executive of the Central Fisheries Board, Minister of State for Communications, Marine and Natural Resoures, Mr. John Browne, TD, Brian Sheerin, CEO of the Southern Regional Fisheries Board and Alan McGurdy, CEO of the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board

Developing Angling Acces

Last year, 2003, was the European Year of People with Disabilities, aimed at rights of disabled people to full equality and participation in all areas. In th look at what is being done across Ireland to ensure access to angling facili

The Government has in recent years advanced the equality agenda so that people with disabilities can participate completely in Irish society. Angling is a sport that can and should be enjoyed by all. There are many people with disabilities, both Irish anglers and the many angling tourists visiting Ireland and consequently, there is a high demand for Access for All angling facilities.

The Fisheries Boards are committed to providing angling opportunities for disabled people. There are over 500,000 people with disabilities in Ireland and nine million in the UK.

Disabilities come in many forms, from the young in wheelchairs, to the senior citizen who has difficulty walking and many other groups.

The Boards seek to address this need in areas such as coastal sea angling centres, where there can be problems boarding people with disabilities on boats and on lakes where facilities at piers are not always good enough for those wishing to go boat fishing. However, access is being developed as resources allow and the Boards are aware of the need to continuously upgrade facilities to create access for everyone.

The Boards have developed a number of purpose built wheelchair friendly facilities around Ireland. Local development groups such as angling clubs and other agencies have also developed facilities in conjunction with or independently to the Fisheries Boards. There are also many natural locations around Ireland that are accessible for those with a disability such as lakes and rivers where a car can be driven to the water's edge and a wheelchair accommodated, with some assistance. Suitable stands have also been constructed/adapted.

Members of the Irish Wheelchair Assocaition pictured with Fisheries Board staff during their visit to Owenea Fishery

Angling access for all is not just about providing physical structures but also providing opportunities for disabled people to take up angling and become aware in involved in our fisheries heritage.

Wild Angling Facility

The first Irish 'Access to all' facility on a wild angling venue was opened last summer by John Browne TD, Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. Situated on the River Suck at Donamon in Co Roscommon, this section of the river has been specially developed at a cost of €300,000, to cater for anglers with a variety of disabilities. The project was carried out by the Shannon Regional Fisheries Board, in conjunction with the Irish Wheelchair Association and the local angling club – The Athleague and Fuerty Coarse Angling Association.

The Suck is one of Ireland's great natural angling locations and has a good stock of Bream, Roach, Tench, Trout and produces the countries' largest number of specimen pike each year. The venue is capable of hosting major access for all angling competitions and yet is ideal for the recreational angler. A 31 person angling event can be facilitated at the venue and the development consists of purpose built ramping and angling platforms. Adjacent to the site is the Irish Wheelchair Associations Holiday Centre at Cuisle, which caters for adults and children with a disability.

Minister John Browne at the opening of the 'Access to all' facility at Donamon, Co. Roscommon.

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National Disabled Angling Facility

The National Disabled Angling Facility is situated in the village of Aughrim in Co Wicklow. This specially adapted angling facility caters for both able-bodied and disabled anglers. The facility was developed by efforts from a local committee and the help of funds from the LEADER Programme. The lake is fully stocked with game fish and open all year around with summer and winter opening times. The facility is fully wheelchair accessible and incorporates car parking and toilet amenities.

Although complete access to all rivers is not currently available, the Fisheries Boards are endeavouring to develop the facilities further in their Regions so everyone can achieve access.

Further information on disabled access for angling, can be obtained from the Regional Fisheries Board where you wish to fish.

State of the art stands at the Donamon development.

A purpose built disabled fishing stand in the Western Fisheries Regional Board

Facilities across the Regional Boards

Full details of disabled angling facilities can be obtained from each Board. Contact details are on page 7 of FIN.

Eastern Regional Fisheries Board

- Under TRAM, a footbridge and disabled angling way has been constructed at the River Dee in Ardee.
- Castle Lake in Monaghan has specific disabled stands for coarse angling.

Southern Regional Fisheries Board

- There are 12 specially developed stands at Ballyteigue Castle near Robertstown, Lowton on the Barrow Branch of the Grand Canal.
- Two stands are available for wheelchair access on Grantstown Lake, Co Laois.
- 5 stands have been constructed in Ballyhonack Lake in East Cork.

South Western Regional Fisheries Board

- The South Western Board has 14 wheelchair hoists for those who wish to go sea angling. They also have one mobile wheelchair hoist for use on a slipway.
- They have two disabled access ramps for coarse anglers and there is access on the River Inny at Waterville for game anglers.

Shannon Regional Fisheries Board

- The Shannon Regional Board has developed a number of custom built 'wheelchair friendly' venues around the region, often in collaboration with local development groups and local authorities
- Among the locations with custom built facilities is the recent state of the art Donamon development in the River Suck Valley, Co Roscommon
- At Lough Errill, Co. Leitrim there is one purpose built disabled fishing stand at the car park which conforms to the guidelines set out by the rehabilitation board of Ireland. There is very good Bream water at Lough Bran near Carrick-on Shannon with one disabled fishing stand.
- At Cloonahee Lake near Strokestown, Co. Roscommon, there are three stands erected in accordance with guidelines set down by the National Rehabilitation Board of Ireland for use by disabled anglers, providing access to good stocks of Bream, Rudd and Hybrids and Pike in the lake.

Western Regional Fisheries Board

- An excellent fishing stand was constructed for disabled anglers at Cong Salmon Hatchery, on the Cong River in Co Mayo.
- Trout fishing can be obtained at Cogeen Lake, a stocked lake off Westport/Leenane road where four stands have complete access.
- The Galway Salmon Weir Fishery have upgraded their facilities and the pathway to the riverbank is designed to cater fully for disabled anglers with ramps into the main building and facilities.
- Near Moycullen the Board has created access to many of the 11 coarse fishing lakes with parking to many of the waters, new fishing stands and spaces, new roads, stiles, footbridge and other facilities.

North Western Regional Fisheries Board

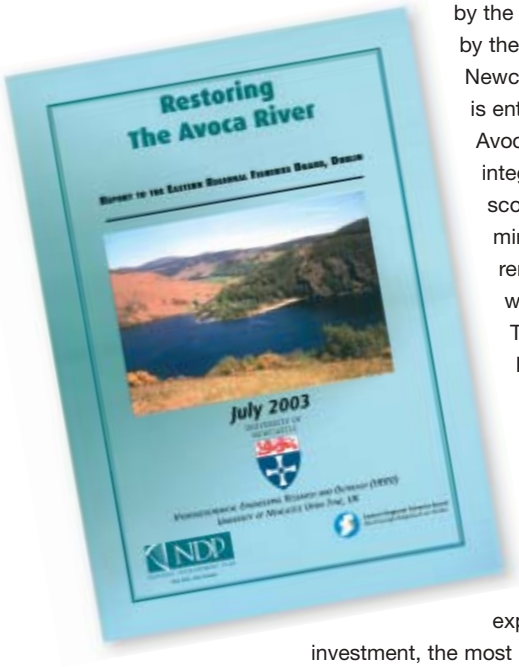
- The North Western Board has good access for anglers at 4 locations on the Moy in the immediate vicinity of Ballina
- Access was developed last year on the Glenamoy in northwest Mayo.

Northern Regional Fisheries Board

- The Owenea River in Glenties, Co Donegal opened a disabled angling stretch adjacent to the angling centre in 2001, where facilities include 500 metres of wheelchair accessible riverbank with safety rails, fishing stands, wheelchair accessible office and toilet facilities.
- The Shannon-Erne waterway has a purpose built stand at Keshcarrigan in Co Leitrim.
- There are also stands to be found at Mullinarry Lake between Cootehill and Ballybay, Lough Major in Ballybay itself and at Town Lake in Killeshandra in Cavan.
- 3 stands have been modified at Kesh Lake to accommodate wheelchair bound anglers but assistance is needed on the gravel path.

Update on plan to restore Avoca River

The Eastern Regional Fisheries Board has released its report with recommendations to restore the Avoca River, in Co. Wicklow. As reported in the last issue of fin, the lower reaches of the Avoca River are the most polluted in Ireland due to discharges from the copper mines which have been in existence for over 230 years.



The report, commissioned by the Board was carried out by the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, and is entitled – 'Restoring the Avoca River – An integrated social/technical scoping study of acid mine drainage remediation options'. It was funded by the Tourism and Recreational Angling Measure of the National Development Plan, 2002.

The findings 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. This is currently about 35 litres per second, depending on weather conditions. The estimated cost of such a plant could be up to €3,600,000.

The report is available from the Eastern Regional Fisheries Board.

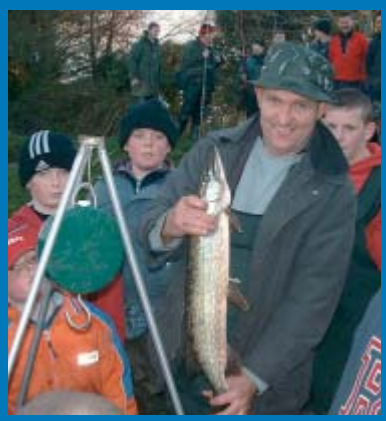
Mark O'Meara, the champion golfer spent two days at the Galway Weir Salmon Fishery accompanied with fellow anglers and golfers, Robb Servick and Peter Paules from Park City, Utah. Their trip was organised by Sean McManamin from the "K Club", a well known International Angler.

Review of the management of pike and pike angling in Ireland

The Central Fisheries Board has a number of key responsibilities, one of which is its policy and advisory function. In recognition of the changing status of pike as an angling resource, a Working Group was established in May 2002 to address the policy potential in this area.

The Working Group reviewed available data and held a workshop in Westport Co. Mayo, with invited guests and speakers from the UK and Ireland, including, fisheries experts, pike specialists, tourism and angling bodies.

The Working Group agreed its report in september 2003 which made a number of significant recommendations in the policy, research and strategy areas. The document has been submitted to the Central Fisheries Board, who following consultation with all Fisheries Board, have recommended it and submitted to the Department of Communications Marine and Natural Resources. It is hoped the Report will form the basis of new policy for the management of pike and pike angling in Ireland



Courtwatch

Council convicted for Sewage Leak

Cavan County Council was convicted of allowing effluent from giant sewage lagoons contaminate the tributary of the Annalee River at Lismagratty, Cavan. Heavy rain caused 12 lagoons holding human sludge on Council land at Lismagratty adjoining the Cavan town dump, to burst, flooding the sewage effluent into the river.

As a result the watercourse was 100 times more polluted than normal unpolluted water and was detected a 1½ m downstream. The Council had five previous convictions for similar pollution cases of sewage works not up to standard. The Judge at Cavan District Court convicted the Council and imposed a fine of €1,000 plus costs of €3,619.

Man Fined for Abusing Fisheries Officers

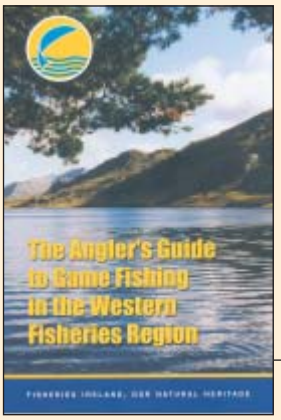
A man who used abusive language to a Fisheries Officer has been convicted of a public order offence, fined €500 and bound to the peace for twelve months. Mr. Michael Carr of Ballina was in Ballina when he was very drunk and abusive to the Officers looking for a colleague of theirs. The defendant became more abusive and told the Officers to tell their colleague that he was "a dead man".

Beeping Tractor warns Poachers

A tractor was driven particularly slowly in front of Fishery Officers who were on duty at the Glenamoy River, when it stopped and a child sounded the horn of the vehicle.

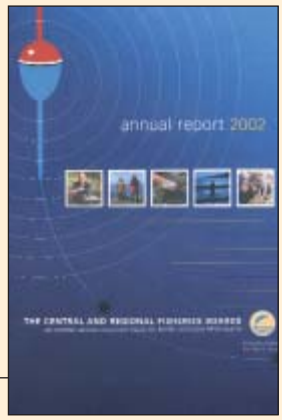
The Officers saw two people go into bushes and after searching they found Mr Moran on the ground, wet from the waist down and admitted that he was putting out a net 'for a feed'. The net contained six salmon. As the river is locally managed, the Judge stated that it was a particularly mean offence in the circumstances.

Publications



WRFB Game Angling Guide

The Game Angling Guide for the Western Fisheries Region has received high praise from many quarters since its publications a short time ago.
This unique 108-page guide has a wealth of information on the region's salmon and trout fisheries, bye-laws, fisheries regulations, angling seasons, complete set of maps with location of the different fisheries, fishery contact names and telephone numbers, fisheries districts, not to mention the many scenic and beautiful photographs of fisheries throughout the region.
Anglers fishing in the Western Fisheries Region will find the publication of immense value. The guide costs €10 plus postage, and can be ordered from the Board's head office at: Weir Lodge, Earl's Island, Galway, telephone: 091 563118, or by email: info@wrfb.ie



Central and Regional Fisheries Boards Annual Report 2002

The Boards are statutorily obliged to produce an annual report of activities every year and the 2002 report is currently available from all the Boards and on the CFB website www.cfb.ie. It is a comprehensive overview of the core activities of the Boards as well as specific schemes.

Irish Specimen Fish Annual Report 2003

The 2003 ISFC annual report is now available from the Central Fisheries Board. 2003 saw the coalfish record, established in 2002, broken and new records were also achieved for Bullhuss and Albacore. A new website has also been developed for the ISFC www.irish-trophy-fish.com, which contains the 2003 report as well as previous reports and details on eligible species, applications and much more.

Economic/Socio Economic Evaluation of Wild Salmon in Ireland – Produced by Indecon Consultants

The Central Fisheries Board published an independent report evaluating the contribution of wild salmon to the Irish economy. The report, 'An Economic / Socio-Economic Evaluation of Wild Salmon in Ireland' analyses both the commercial and tourism angling sectors and makes recommendations on how Ireland's wild salmon resource can best be managed in the future. Copies are available from the Central Fisheries Board at a cost of €20 or to download free at www.cfb.ie.

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We welcome your comments, letters and suggestions. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure the information supplied in this publication is correct, we cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the Fisheries Boards.

finfile number 6

The Bream (*Abramis brama*)

The bream in a member of the carp family, the largest family of freshwater fishes in the northern hemisphere. It dominates the fish fauna of lakes and rivers in Europe, North America and Asia. Adult bream can grow to over 12 lb in Irish waters and the current record stands at 12lbs 3ozs for a fish caught on rod and line. The specimen weight for bream is 7.5lb.

Adult bream are also referred to as 'slabs' or 'bronze' bream. They can be distinguished from related coarse fish species by their large size, but possess a number of key diagnostic features. The mouth is inferior, meaning that the upper jaw protrudes. The large flanks of fish are generally bronze in colour and the fins are black. The tail is large and deeply forked, the lower lobe being slightly larger. The anal fin, located on the ventral side of the body close to the tail, is far larger in bream than in any of the closely related species. Immature bream are known as 'skimmers' and differ from the adults by virtue of their silver colouration.

During the spawning season it is possible to distinguish mature male bream from mature female fish. The former have a decidedly 'rough' texture reflecting the presence of large and conspicuous nuptial tubercles on the head, back, shoulders and upper flanks of the fish. When not in spawning condition it is impossible to differentiate between male and female.

Bream in Irish Waters

It is probable that, like many of out freshwater fish, bream is not native to Ireland. Historically, the distribution of bream in the country was very limited. As part of ongoing fishery management programmes for the development of angling watercourses in the country, the Inland Fisheries Trust (now the Central and Regional Fisheries Boards) transplanted bream to selected rivers and lakes. This work is ongoing and currently bream are widely distributed in rivers, lakes and canals throughout the country.

Bream are among the freshwater fish species most prized by British coarse anglers. Between April and October each year large numbers of tourist anglers visit Ireland in pursuit of the large shoals of wild bream that reside in our larger watercourses. Very large catches of bream, often in excess of 200 lb per day, are commonly reported by anglers fishing such noted bream venues as Lough Derg, Portumna and the Meadows on the River Shannon, Lough Ree, Inniscarra Reservoir in Co Cork and countless other locations.

Habitat

The bream is essentially a fish of large, deep, slowing-flowing or static watercourses with muddy or silted beds. Factors that favour the rapid growth and proliferation of bream in Irish waters include high alkalinity, shelter, extensive areas of silted bottom within a depth range of 1-6m and an abundance of tall marginal vegetation. While bream essentially are a freshwater fish they are known to occur in brackish, tidal reaches of some rivers such as the Rivers Shannon, Barrow and Suir.

Biology and Ecology

The bream in Ireland is a long-lived, slow-growing fish and specimens as old as 23 years have been recorded. In their first year of life, bream can achieve a fork length (to the centre of the fork in the tail fin) of 4cm. In rich waters bream of 10 years old reach an average fork length of 41cm and a weight of 1.4kg. Corresponding lengths and weights for fish from poorer waters are 31cm and 0.5kg, respectively.

Bream spawn between early May and early June, generally when water temperatures reach 15°C. Prior to spawning it is not uncommon for bream to embark on spawning migrations, up to 40 km from their home territory.

Female bream become mature when they are between 7 and 10 years old and generally when greater than 30cm long. As with most freshwater fish, the males mature at a slightly younger age. The adhesive eggs are deposited in clumps on submerged aquatic vegetation, but more commonly on the submerged stems of emergent, marginal reeds and rushes. Female bream produce on average 30,000 to 40,000 mature eggs per kg of body weight.

Hybrids between bream and roach, and bream and rudd are commonplace in Irish waters. All three species are genetically closely related and can produce viable hybrid offspring. The roach/bream hybrid is now widely distributed in Ireland and is significantly more numerous than bream.

Bream are benthivorous or bottom-feeding fish and the locations of actively foraging bream shoals can often be identified, particularly in slow-flowing rivers or canals, by the presence of turbid or coloured water. The fish cause this turbidity when foraging in the mud for insects. The first food of young bream consists of unicellular algae. In the early life stages planktonic cladocera represent the bulk of the diet of bream, supplemented with chironomid larvae and molluscs. With larger bream (>28cm) insect larvae, mainly chironomids, are the most frequent food items although molluscs, gammarus and asellus are also commonly eaten.

Bream feed most actively during the spring and summer months, when water temperatures rise above about 15°C. They feed in shoals, most commonly concentrating on relatively weed-free muddy beds. During the colder months of the year the fish commonly migrate to deeper areas of the watercourse, where they lie relatively dormant. Fishing for bream during these cold periods tends not to be productive.

Further information can be obtained from Dr. Joe Caffrey at the CFB.

finfacts

- The bream is a member of the carp family
- Adult bream can grow to over 12lb in Irish waters
- Specimens as old as 23 years have been recorded
- Bream spawn between early May and early June