

Erriff Fishery & Aasleagh Lodge Newsletter 2010



Fantastic Improvement on Salmon Catch – 374 for the Season!

The season opened again after one of the coldest winters for many years. There was very little rain in February and March and not a lot in April and May. The limited amount of Spring salmon fishing was hampered by cold nights, bright sunshine and overall low water levels. Many of the early returning salmon were exploited by a huge pod of dolphins which frequented the Killary and surrounding coastline for several weeks during the dry period.

The run of summer fish was slow to start and remained poor for a number of weeks. The fact that the run was not materializing with only 600 fish through the counter by the end of July there was a fear that the Conservation Limit of 1300 salmon would not be reached. This in turn would have dramatic consequences on the fishery for the following years. A Catch & Release Policy was strongly recommended and it operated very successfully with a 'rancher' salmon offered in return for wild fish released. In late July and August the run of salmon did improve beyond all expectations and rod catches increased accordingly. The increased runs of salmon through the counter continued into September and the first week of October. The improved runs of fish were not alone reflected in the rod catch and also in the catching-up of Brood Stock for the hatchery in December. A total of 50+ fish were taken in the top section of Beat 3 from Shralea Bridge to the top of School House.

The 2011 First Fish Incentive!

Once again in order to encourage more anglers to compete for the first salmon we are offering the following incentive for 2011 for anglers staying in the Lodge or Cottages. Fishing is free until the first fish is caught. If the first fish is caught in the first 15 days of April we are offering dinner bed and breakfast for two for one night at Aasleagh Lodge. If the first fish is caught in the last two weeks of April we are offering either dinner for two or bed and breakfast for two to the successful captor. If the fish is photographed and released we will throw in a bottle of Champagne! If the first fish is not caught until May we are offering a free day's fishing on the Erriff to the captor! The winner last season was John McCullough from Dublin who no doubt will try for two in a row.



Sea Trout Recovery

There has been a remarkable recovery in the sea trout stock with fish returning in a very healthy state and most devoid of lice. Early summer brought a very good run of sea trout into the lower beat on every tide – despite the low water in June the sea trout managed to run the fish pass at Aasleagh Falls. The best run during June was 178 trout to 2.5lbs through the fish counter in a day – however this was superseded on the last day of the month when just over 500 sea trout passed through during a small spate. Data on the number of sea trout is included in the table for Aasleagh Falls fish counter.



Sea trout and grilse in the trap at Aasleagh Falls

Monthly Rod Catches 2010

The Table below shows the monthly salmon and sea trout catches on the Erriff for 2010.

| Month | Salmon | Sea Trout |
|--------------|------------|------------|
| April | 0 | 0 |
| May | 1 | 5 |
| June | 8 | 15 |
| July | 153 | 114 |
| August | 78 | 25 |
| September | 134 | 101 |
| Total | 374 | 260 |

Scientific Research

The Erriff continues to be an important centre for research on salmon and sea trout. Research on sea trout continued with trapping of fish on the Tawnyard Lough outflow, which recorded a migration of 1,117 sea trout smolts, and 1,987 salmon smolts, in addition to 335 sea trout kelts and 5 salmon kelts. This trap contributes to a long-standing dataset and gives valuable data on sea trout and salmon spawning in the catchment.

Tawnyard Trap Count 2010

| Month | Sea Trout | | Salmon | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|----------|-------------|
| | Kelts | Smolts | Kelts | Smolts |
| March | 40 | 0 | 3 | 0 |
| April | 288 | 536 | 2 | 924 |
| May | 7 | 581 | 0 | 1063 |
| Total | 335 | 1117 | 5 | 1987 |

The fish counter and trap at Aasleagh Falls was operational throughout 2010 and all upstream migrating salmon and sea trout were recorded. The trap was upgraded to ensure smoother operation, and the numbers of fish recorded are shown in the table below.

| Month | Salmon | Sea Trout |
|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| January | 0 | 0 |
| February | 3 | 0 |
| March | 0 | 2 |
| April | 2 | 2 |
| May | 2 | 1 |
| June | 17 | 835 |
| July | 591 | 1247 |
| August | 1054 | 263 |
| September | 987 | 356 |
| October | 323 | 131 |
| November | 55 | 19 |
| December | 8 | 3 |
| Total | 3042 | 2859 |

The Erriff Fishery is also participating in a study on the importance of local adaptation to the survival and fitness of Atlantic salmon in the wild, in co-operation with Dr. Philip McGinnity, a researcher with NUI Cork and the Marine Institute, Burrishoole. The study consists of planting eggs from wild and hybrid cross-breeding in study streams in the Erriff and Burrishoole catchments, and following up with electro-fishing and DNA sampling over the next 2 years to assess their survival, and the relative fitness of the different strains. It is expected

this study will contribute to scientific knowledge of the importance or otherwise of local genetic adaptation in salmon, which feeds into fishery management planning for different stocks.

The SUMBAWS project also continued, with ranched fish, treated with anti-lice treatments, and control (untreated) fish returning in 2010. A total of 41 ranched fish were taken on rod and line and 175 ranched fish were sampled in the trap during the season. The relative survival of treated and untreated fish will help in the assessment of mortality of salmon at sea due to lice infestation. All ranched fish are removed at the trap at Aasleagh Falls so they cannot spawn with wild Erriff fish, thereby protecting the genetic integrity of the population.

Drying Room

At long last a purpose built Drying Room was constructed adjacent to the Rod Room in Aasleagh Lodge. The drying facilities for outdoor clothing were previously non-existent. The Drying Room is fitted with two radiators, a dehumidifier and clothes racks etc. It has operated very successfully with up to 2.5 litres of water removed from guests clothing overnight. Clothes are both dry and warm the following morning – it is welcomed by both anglers and hill walkers staying in the Lodge & Cottages.



Annie Rusby (UK), releasing a nice grilse in the Coronation Pool

No. of Salmon Caught on Each Beat

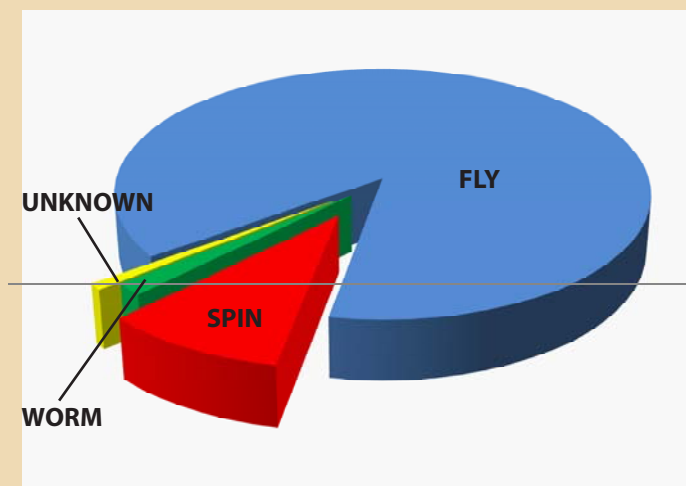
| Beat | No. of Salmon | % of Total |
|--------------|---------------|------------|
| Tawnyard L. | 2 | 0.6 |
| Above Beat 1 | 0 | 0 |
| 1 | 2 | 0.6 |
| 2 | 2 | 0.5 |
| 3 | 13 | 3.5 |
| 4 | 11 | 3 |
| 5 | 23 | 6 |
| 6 | 42 | 11 |
| 7 | 11 | 3 |
| 8 | 5 | 1.4 |
| 9 | 263 | 71 |
| Total | 374 | 100 |



Jesus Herrando (Spain), with his first ever salmon on his first trip to the Erriff

Salmon Caught by Method 2010

The chart below shows the proportion of fish caught by different methods in 2010



Eva Hompesch (Germany) playing a fish in the Falls Pool



Nationality of Visitors

The table below shows the nationality of visiting anglers over the last 5 years.

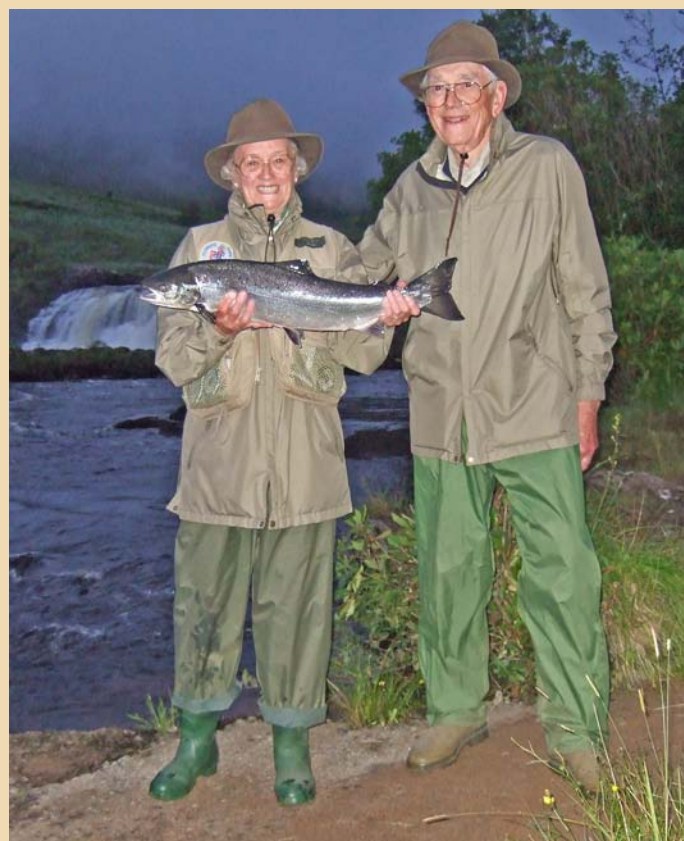
| Country | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 |
|------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| R.O.I. | 36% | 36% | 39% | 43% | 48% |
| N. Ireland | 15% | 9% | 7% | 11% | 9% |
| UK | 35% | 33% | 40% | 28% | 25% |
| France | 7% | 14% | 9% | 7% | 10% |
| Germany | 2% | 4% | 2% | 9% | 5% |
| Other | 5% | 4% | 3% | 2% | 3% |

Top 10 Heaviest Salmon 2010

The table below shows the top 10 heaviest salmon caught during 2010.

| Name | Date | Pool | Method | Wt. (lbs) |
|---------------|---------|---------------|-------------------|-----------|
| J. Nelson | 17 Aug | Falls Pool | Fly (Cascade) | 11.75 |
| G. Forde | 17 Jun | Middle Garden | Fly (Allys) | 11.5 |
| P. Huggard | 8 Sep | Broken Bridge | Spinning | 11.5 |
| L. Marcoz | 17 Sep | Falls Pool | Fly (Lady Falica) | 10.5 |
| D. Chambers | 15 Sep | Falls Pool | Fly (Shrimp) | 10 (R) |
| J. McCullough | 21 May | Upper Garden | Fly (Cascade) | 9 |
| D. Chambers | 12 Sep | Falls Pool | Fly (Shrimp) | 9 (R) |
| J. Murray | 24 Sep | Sally Pool | Fly (Shrimp) | 9 (R) |
| K. Glynn | 12 Aug | Sea Pool | Spinning | 8.75 |
| J. Keogh | 30 Sept | Falls Pool | Fly (Cascade) | 8.75 |

(R) = Released



Hazel and Michael Jackson with a fine salmon landed by Hazel on Beat 9.

Winter 2010-11

We have had a very severe start to winter this year, with sub-zero temperatures, snow and ice for most of December. It is many years since it was this cold, with temperatures as low as -17°C ! Much of the river was covered in ice. Many of you who fished the Coronation Pool last season would not have recognised it in its winter coat! Spawning was held back significantly, with salmon remaining in the deeper pools, but thankfully with the thaw after Christmas a lot of spawning activity has been observed, and the cold weather is not expected to impact too severely on salmon stocks. Indeed, there are suggestions that cold winters in the North Atlantic actually improve salmon survival at sea - if so we may have a bumper season to come!

The Coronation Pool on Beat 8, December 2010



Available Salmon Surplus for 2011

The run of wild salmon in the Erriff and Delphi rivers is determined from counter and rod catch data respectively each year. The most recent five year data is used by the scientists to predict the salmon run in the following year. Although 2010 saw a significant improvement in the Erriff salmon run, taken over the most recent five year period, the salmon surplus for 2011 has only slightly increased largely due to poorer salmon runs in 2008 and 2009. Killary Harbour is regarded as a common estuary and the salmon surplus is divided between the Erriff and Delphi rod fisheries and the Killary draft net fishery. The available surplus for 2011 is 809 salmon, a small increase from the 2010 surplus of 791 salmon. The 2011 surplus will be divided between the rods on both rivers and the Killary draft nets. An increased salmon surplus in future years can be expected if salmon runs continue to improve.

Acknowledgements

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have assisted with the smooth running of the Lodge and the protection of the fishery during the year. We wish to extend a special work of thanks to Inspector Arthur O'Malley and staff for all the protection work carried out on the fishery and at sea during the year. We also thank Michael Kane and his staff engaged in the Rural Social Employment Scheme, and Killian Dunford and the FAS Staff, for the general maintenance and improvements of the Lodge grounds and maintaining the angling access to the pools on the river.

It is not possible for Aasleagh Lodge to function without the dedication and commitment of all staff. In that regard a very special word of thanks goes to Mary, Martin Joe and Donavin.



Mary making her delicious brown bread in the kitchen.



Fisheries Inspector Arthur O'Malley and some of the Ballinacill protection staff on a sea patrol.

ERRIFF RATES 2011

River Erriff Angling

| | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| April 1st – May 13th: | €45 per rod per day. | €250 per week – 6 days. |
| May 14th – July 1st: | €60 per rod per day. | €320 per week – 6 days. |
| July 2nd – Sep. 9th: | €70 per rod per day. | €400 per week – 6 days. |
| Sep.10th – Sep. 30th: | €60 per rod per day. | €320 per week – 6 days. |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|-----------------|
| Derrintin Lough (Brown Trout) | €30.00 | Half day €20.00 |
| Tawnyard Lough (Salmon & Sea Trout) | €50.00 | Half Day €30.00 |

Aasleagh Lodge Accommodation

| | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------|
| Weekly Half Board* 7 Nights (ensuite) | €700pps |
| Daily Half Board* (ensuite) | €110pps |
| Bed & Breakfast (ensuite) | €65pps |
| Bed & Breakfast (standard room) | €50pps |
| Bed & Breakfast (triple ensuite) | €55pps |
| Single Room Supplement | €10/night |
| Killary Suite Supplement | €20/night |
| Dinner | €45 |
| Packed Lunch | €10 |

*Half Board includes Full Irish Breakfast and Evening Meal.

PPS - Per Person Sharing

Cottage Rates

(Self Catering, Property Rental only. Electricity extra)

| | |
|----------------------|----------------|
| January to May: | €350 per week. |
| June to September: | €600 per week. |
| October to December: | €350 per week. |

Short term breaks and long term lettings available.

Deposits are required upon acceptance of booking and are non-refundable.

Accommodation & Fishing: 50% deposit on booking.

Balance: Payable one month in advance of arrival date.

Enquiries

Contact James Stafford, Aasleagh Lodge, Leenane, Co. Galway, Ireland.

Tel: +353 (0) 95 42252

Fax: +353 (0) 95 42361

E-mail: erriff.fish@iol.ie

Web: www.aasleaghlodge.ie