



# ERRIFF FISHERY & AASLEAGH LODGE

## NEWSLETTER 2005

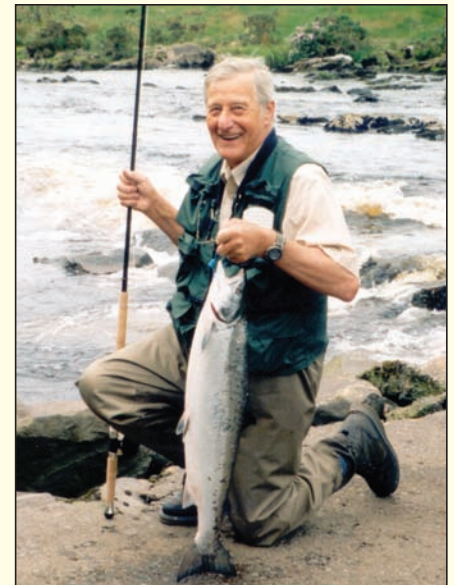


### EXCITING TIMES AHEAD?

Following what can only be described as a disappointing season there is now a significant possibility of a voluntary set aside scheme for drift net fishermen by 2007 season. This would have the potential to allow very significantly more salmon – of all sizes - up the Erriff river. In recent years it has been abundantly clear that while we continued to get a significant number of grilse into the system these were always somewhat on the small side being 'graded' by the

drift nets that are intensively fished in the Ballinakill district and are selecting for larger fish.

Should this scheme come into play there is a much more encouraging future for the wild salmon fisheries in the years ahead. If the existing structure of drift and draft nets are allowed to continue it is likely that the deterioration, evident in the fish runs over the last few years, will continue.



*Mr. J. Theobold U.K. with a 11.25lb. Cracker from the Garden Pool on Beat 9.*

### TWENTY YEARS A GROWING.

What a year to celebrate twenty years as Manager of the Erriff Fishery with a very late run of Grilse and a rod catch of just 250 salmon. Yes, I am here since 20th May 1985 - a season when Erriff rods caught 487 salmon. The following year catches increased to 573 and in 1987 the rod catch again increased to 639. There was a big demand for salmon angling at the time and Aasleagh Lodge and the Erriff River on the West Coast of the Emerald Isle were the place to be. In 1987 the 'big' year came with a rod catch of 875 salmon – anglers were saying "you (meaning all the Staff) are doing a great job – you will make a 1,000 fish next season". Sadly it never happened that year or since. Unfortunately with the sea trout collapse in the late 1980's and ongoing associated problems with lice from salmon farms coupled with the continued exploitation of wild salmon by drift nets such an ambitious target will be hard to achieve.



*Mr. Selby Knox, U.K. caught this 9lb. fish on a Red Alley Shrimp in the Broken Bridge Pool on Beat 5.*

## KARENIA MIKIMOTOI MUST TAKE ITS SHARE OF THE BLAME!

Over the last few summers a new phenomenon of an algal bloom taking place off the west coast has had an enormous impact on the wild fisheries. Karenia has become a major seasonal problem off Killary and has been blamed for substantial mortalities in wild fish particularly resident species as well as shellfish. There is also a strong probability that the anoxic conditions produced by this alga were an impediment to the migrating salmon returning to the fishery.

On the sea trout front 2005 must go down as another disaster with extremely poor returns of trout to the system. In addition as all fish were being monitored it was possible to assess the condition of the few trout that did return to the river. These could only be described as returning smolts or post smolts with lit-

tle if any condition gained since they migrated to sea and carrying significant lice populations. Given the fact that the sea lice levels on the salmon farm close to the Erriff did not have enormous lice populations concern must be raised as to whether the trigger and target levels for lice currently used are adequately stringent to protect wild fish. It is our opinion that the standard must be raised to ensure the survival of the wild sea trout.

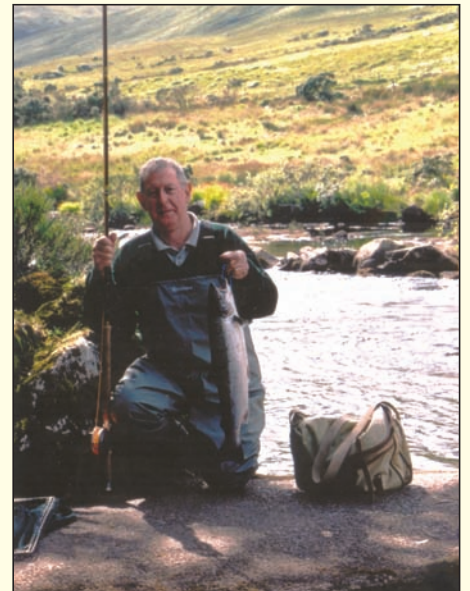
There are of course the other predators that increase unimpeded for instance the cormorants, seals and mink. No concerted effort has been made to devise an appropriate management programme for these species.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SPRINGER SEASON.

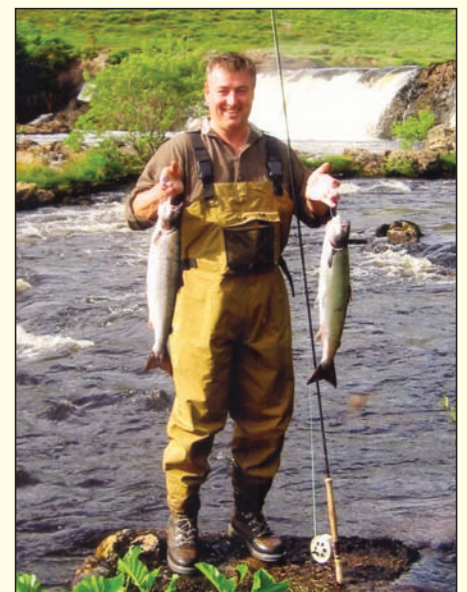
- First fish of the season taken by Fishery Manager on 21st. May.
- Heaviest fish of the season 12lbs. taken by Mr. E. Stroud in the Holly Pool on Beat 8 on 24th. May.
- Mr. J. Theobald, U.K. takes a cracker at 11.25lbs. from the Garden Pool on a Black Boar pattern on 5th. June.
- A Collie Dog catches the first Springer of the day for Mr. J. McCullough, Irl. on Beat 4 on the 27th. May and he later releases another one from the Quarry Pool on Beat 2.
- Mr. D. Dugdale, U.K. takes a 9lbs. fish from the Boat Pool on Beat 5.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF SUMMER SEASON.

- Mr. J. Langdon, Derbyshire, U.K. has 10.25lb. fish from the Black Banks.
- Mr. W. Beattie's Party N.Irl. have 9 fish in 4 days fishing.
- Mr. G. Garnier, France has 4 fish and releases another 3 in the last week of June.
- A fish of 8.75lbs. for Mr. D. Graham, N.I. from Toad's Pool on a Yellow Alley Shrimp Fly on 5th. July.
- Mrs. J. Harrison, U.K. has 4 fish for the week – taking 2 in the one day from the Coronation Pool on Beat 8.
- Mr. U. Korolkoff, France has 3 fish for the week – again 2 from the Coronation Pool.
- Best run of fish for the season as river rises from 0.55 metres to 1.5 metres in three hours on 23rd. of July.
- Dr. B. Maloney, Irl. and his son Liam catch bag limit each from the Falls Pool on Beat 9 on 23rd. July in 1.5 metre spate.
- Another bag limit evening for Mr. C. Johnston, N.I. with 3 fresh run grilse in 15 casts on Beat 9.
- Mr. B. Cotton Party have seven fish for the week including 2 each for Mr. Cotton and Mr. M. Broughton.
- Dr. D. Harrison, U.K. and son Simon catch 6 fish for the week.
- Mr. K. Glynn and Mr. E. Murphy, Dublin have two fish each for the week.
- Munroe Killer takes 2 fish for Mr. B. Holloway on Beats 3 and 9.
- Richmond Party, keep Isle of Man flag flying with 6 fish for the week with Mr. Richmond catching a fresh 10 pounder from the Coronation Pool on 28th. July.



*Dr. B. Maloney, Ireland, with a fresh-run fish taken in the Falls Pool on Beat 9.*



*Mr. Jeremy Mackinson, U.K. with a brace of fresh Grilse from Beat 9.*

# AUTUMN FISHING

- 100 fish move upstream in 1.1 metre spate on 4th. August.
- Eight local Angling Club members catch 5 fish on 7th. Best fish 6.5lbs. taken on a Silver Wilkinson.
- Super week for Mr. Steve Hunter fishing with Andrew Kyd's Party from the U.K. catches his first ever salmon and goes on to catch another 5 fish.
- A first ever salmon for Ross O'Shea, Skerries Co. Dublin taken on a Shrimp Fly from the School House Pool on Beat 3.
- Mr. D. Odemann, Germany keeps his first ever salmon and releases another fish from the Garden Pool on Beat 9.
- Bag limit of 3 fish on 24th. August for Mrs. B. Commander on Beat 8.
- Mr. J. Weait takes 5 fish including one on a Tosh in the Coronation Pool in bright sunshine.
- Mr. McGrath, Irl. releases two fish including a 9 pounder taken in the Cottage Pool on Beat 4 on an Orange/Gold Shrimp Fly.
- Mr. A. Holden and J. McCullough, Dublin have 3 fish each during their stay.
- A Stoats Tail takes a sparkling fresh 7 lbs. fish for local angler Michael Coyne in the Sea Pool on the last day of August.
- Mr. S. Westwood, U.K. takes first fish in September from the Sally Pool on a Silver Wilkinson.
- Mr. C. Howarth, U.K. takes bag limit of 3 fish on 10th. Sept. on a Willie Gunn & Mr. N. Howarth takes his first ever salmon on a Yellow Shrimp pattern.
- Mr. P. Morissens, Belgium releases a 12lbs. fish taken in the Glenanane Stones on Beat 7.
- A sparkling fresh run 8 lbs. fish for Mr. D. Muckian, Irl. in Upper Garden Pool on 17th. Sept.
- Mr. G. Garnier & Mr. B. Lemetayer, France catch 9 fish for the week.
- Mr. I. Scurll Party, U. K. has 12 fish for three rods in 4 days.
- Mr. A. Caffrey's Party, Kildare had 10 fish during the last week of the season.



*Mrs. J. Harrison, U.K.  
with a sea liced fish from the Coronation Pool on Beat 8.*



*Rachael Moore with dad Greg, of Sandycove, Co. Dublin caught her first ever Salmon in the Garden Pool on Beat 9 on 12th. Aug.*



*Mr. Steve Hunter, U.K.  
with one of 6 fish he caught during his weeks fishing in mid August.*



*Mr. N. Richmond, Isle of Man  
with a 10lb. fish taken in the Coronation Pool Beat 8.*



*Mr. A. Holden, Ireland, with an August grilse  
taken on an Orange Shrimp from the Bridge Pool on Beat 9.*

## TOP HEAVIEST SALMON 2005

Name	Date	Pool	Method	Weight
Mr. E. Stroud, U.K.	24th. May	Holly Pool B8	Spin	12.0lbs.
Mr. P. Morissens, Belgium	15th. Sept.	Glenanane Stones B7	Fly	12.0 lbs. (R)
Mr. J. Theobald, U.K.	5th. June	Garden Pool B9	Fly	11.25lbs.
Mr. J. Langdon, U.K.	8th. June	Black Banks B6	Bait	10.25lbs.
Mr. N. Richmond, Isle of Man	28th. July	Coronation B8	Bait	10.0lbs.
Mr. J. Stafford, Irl.	21st. May	Poleen B4	Willie Gunn	9.5lbs.
Mr. D. Dugdale, U.K.	27th. May	Boat Pool Beat 5	Spin	9.0lbs.
Mr. J. McCullough, Irl.	27th. May	Quarry Pool B2	Collie Dog	9.0lbs.
Mr. M. McGrath, Irl.	18th. Aug.	Poleen B4	Shrimp Fly	9.0lbs. (R)
Mr. D. Graham, N.I.	5th. July	Toad's Pool B4	Shrimp Fly	8.75lbs.

(R) - Weight estimated and fish released.

## NUMBER OF SALMON TAKEN ON EACH BEAT

Beat	Number of Salmon	Percentage Catch
Above Beat 1	3	1.2%
1	5	2.0%
2	6	2.4%
3	12	4.8%
4	25	10.0%
5	18	7.2%
6	21	8.4%
7	15	6.0%
8	39	15.6%
9	106	42.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

## MONTHLY SALMON & SEA TROUT CATCHES 2005

Month	Number of Salmon	Number of Sea Trout
April	0	0
May	8	5
June	31	19
July	79	34
August	63	9
September	69	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>79</b>

## NUMBER OF SALMON TAKEN BY DIFFERENT ANGLING METHODS

Method	Number of Salmon	Percentage Catch %
Fly	174	69.5%
Worm	41	16.5%
Spinner	35	14.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>250</b>	<b>100%</b>

## FISH COUNTER

The recorded count of fish for the season is as follows...

Month	Salmon	Sea Trout	Ranched
Jan	0	0	NA
Feb.	1	0	NA
March	No records		NA
April (19-30th)	7	0	NA
May	28	10	NA
*June	43	37	0
*July	393	196	26
*August	625	46	77
*Sept.	143	42	22
<b>Total</b>	<b>1240</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>125</b>

\*SUMBAWS project put into operation on 24th June and ended on 1st October

## TAWNYARD LOUGH SEA TROUT RESEARCH PROGRAMME

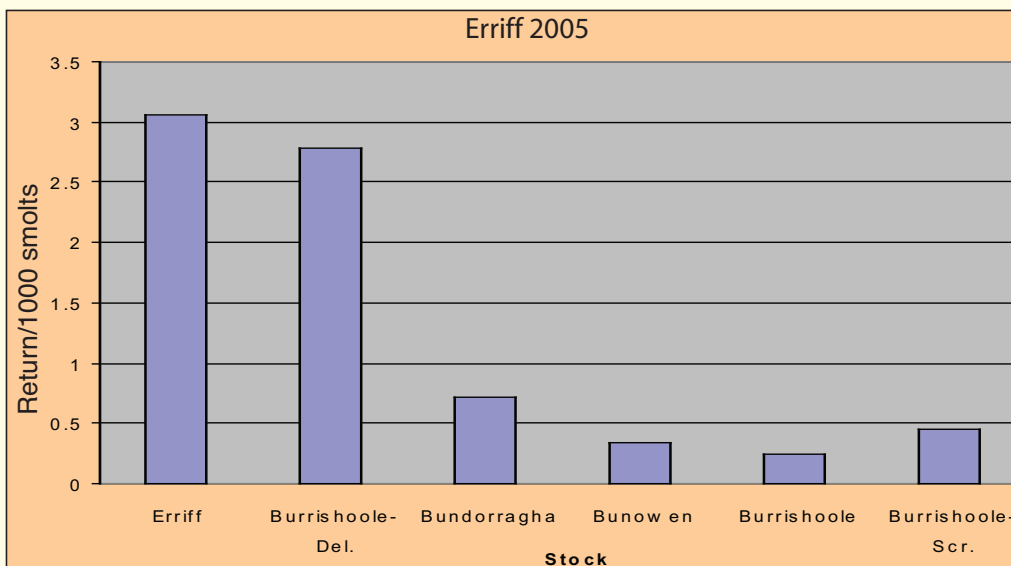
The trapping operation on the outflow from Tawnyard Lough commenced on 1st. March and continued until the 31st. May. A notable feature was the number of salmon kelts taken during the first few weeks. Overall the number of sea trout kelts was disappointing. The monthly numbers of fish migrating downstream through the trap were as follows...

Month	Sea Trout Kelts	Sea Trout Smolts	Salmon Kelts	Salmon Smolts
March	65	36	15	4
April	254	1711	1	787
May	27	1951	0	306
<b>Total</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>3698</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1097</b>

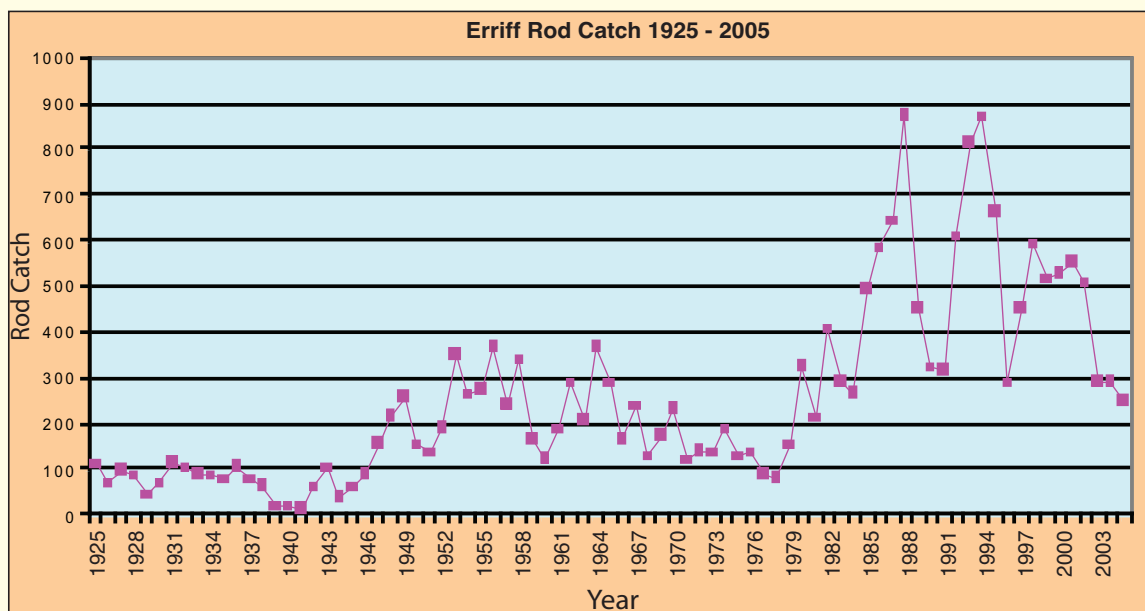
# EXPERIMENT TO DETERMINE SEA LICE EFFECTS ON SALMON SMOLTS IN KILLARY

An experiment began in spring 2004 to investigate the potential impact of sea lice infestation on salmon smolts migrating through Killary harbour. Previous studies have shown that sea lice from marine salmon farms can cause heavy lice infestation on salmon smolts leading to high smolt mortalities. The high levels of sea lice on sea trout have been linked to lice production from salmon farms in the west of Ireland but little information is available on the impact of lice on salmon smolts.

Under a multi-national programme an in-feed treatment was given to one group of salmon smolts (to give protection against sea lice infestation) while a second group were fed a placebo (not given protection). Both groups of smolts were released above Aasleagh falls in spring 2004 and grilse from these releases have returned to the commercial fishery and the Aasleagh trap in 2005. When the tag codes are read, information on the marine survival of both groups will help determine the possible impact of sea lice on outward migrating salmon smolts in Killary harbour. A second release of treated and untreated groups took place in spring 2005 the return of these fish will again be monitored in 2006. Over the period of the grilse run in 2005 109-coded wire tags were recovered from fish entering the Erriff river. It was possible to determine which group of fish each of these fish had come from in addition to identifying fish that were not returning to the fishery from where they were released.



Of the 1403 salmon entering the system 9.6% were hatchery reared and of these 7.2% were not from the Erriff. With the trap in place the impact of straying upstream was eliminated. The rod catch was one of the lowest in the last 20 years (Fig.2). Despite this and the late appearance of grilse the rod exploitation rate at 17.8% was high with good weather conditions for angling from July through to the end of season.



## COMMERCIAL CATCHES

The commercial catch of Salmon for the District reflected the reduced run of fish this season. The run was late again this year with the main run occurring in July/August. The following is the recorded catch for both the Drift and Draft nets in the Ballinakill District.

	2005	2004	2003
Drift Net Quota	4376	4827	5569
Total Drift Net Catch	3737	4026	5484
<b>% of Drift Quota Caught</b>	<b>85.4%</b>	<b>83.4%</b>	<b>98.5%</b>
Draft Net Quota	1307	1609	1663
Total Draft Net Catch	677	355	1487
<b>% of Draft Quota Caught</b>	<b>51.8%</b>	<b>22.1%</b>	<b>89.4%</b>

## NATIONALITY OF ANGLERS FISHING THE ERRIFF FISHERY 2005

United Kingdom	43.0%	Republic of Ireland	27.5%	Netherlands	1.3%
Northern Ireland	13.0%	France	8.5%	Luxembourg	2.6%
U.S.A.	1.2%	Italy	0.5%	Others	2.0%
Germany	3.0%				

## OBITUARIES

In 2005 the Lodge lost one of the best loved characters of Leenane. Bridgie Keane was cook and housekeeper at Aasleagh Lodge on the River Erriff for almost fifty years. All the regulars who stayed at the Lodge and fished the Erriff knew and adored Bridgie. She was always happy, cheerful and welcoming. Her pleasant demeanour put many a first time visitor to the Erriff at ease because she was the epitome of a genuine Irish welcome.

Her cooking skills were legendary. She used only fresh local produce of the land and sea including shell fish and Connemara lamb and the best description of the results of her culinary skills was "simply delicious". However, it will be for her freshly baked scones and brown soda bread that she will be best remembered. They were enjoyed and lauded by all.

Bridgie died peacefully at her home, Aasleagh, Leenane, Co. Galway, on 9th June, 2005.



She was laid to rest in Leenane cemetery to the chorus of "Leenane by the Sea" her favourite party piece.

She is survived by her son, John, daughters Mary and Noreen and her grandchildren to whom our sympathy is extended.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dílis.

We also extend our sympathy to the families and friends of several anglers who passed away during the year. Douglas Grove of Marlborough, Wiltshire. Terry Smith of Hyde, Cheshire, Eamonn Tonge of Rathoath, Co. Meath and Vernon Upton of Cardiff in Wales – Vernon was 84 when he passed away and had just completed his book "Upon their Lawful Occasions" which tells of his life as a merchant seaman on the North Atlantic run during the second world war.

Lord Brabourne a former owner of Aasleagh Lodge and the Erriff Fishery passed away in September this year.

## 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 word 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 would also like to thank John Connor and the staff of FAS who maintained the grounds around the Lodge and Cottage and carried out maintenance along the river banks during the season.

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, Nicole, Ashleagh, Noella, Martin Joe, and Liam all of whom are vital to the efficient running of the Lodge and Fishery.

*James Stafford, December 2005*



Bord Iascaigh Réigiúnach an Iarthair

# The Western Regional Fisheries Board



## Erriff Fishery

### CATCH DATA FISHERY RECORD 1996/2005

#### SALMON

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	10 Year Average
288	452	592	515	527	552	508	292	293	250	426

### CATCH DATA FISHERY RECORD 1996/2005

#### SEA TROUT

1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
263	466	520	637	321	344	282	142	127	79

Due to the declining number of sea trout in the Connemara area a statutory ban on the taking of sea trout was introduced in 1990. Accordingly, all fish are returned alive.

### Terms and Conditions

- (1) Anglers fishing the river must be in possession of a valid fishing permit and a State Salmon Rod Licence. Anglers must fish in accordance with the provisions of the Fisheries Acts 1959-2000. Licences are available at the Fishery.
- (2) A day permit allows for fishing from 9.30 a.m. to 7.00 p.m.
- (3) Fly fishing only between 9.30 a.m. and 5.00 p.m.
- (4) Anglers who have not caught a salmon on the fly are permitted to use worms between 5.00 p.m. and 7.00 p.m. on all beats, and may use spinners on Beats 1 and 2 only.
- (5) **As a conservation measure for spring salmon, angling methods are restricted to fly only during April and May. There is a bag limit of 1 Salmon per rod per day until 1st June.**
- (6) The Manager will determine when spinning is allowed under high water conditions and under these conditions a daily bag limit may be imposed.
- (7) Generally there is a limit of one fish per rod using worms. This limit also applies to anglers availing of spinning concessions on Beats 1 and 2. Any changes are at the discretion of the Manager.
- (8) At the discretion of the Manager, Prawn/Shrimp fishing may be permitted between 5.00pm and 7.00pm during periods of dry weather. A bag limit of 1 fish per rod will apply in these circumstances.
- (9) Use of a gaff for landing fish is prohibited.
- (10) Residents of Aasleagh Lodge and Aasleagh Cottage may after 8.00 p.m. go on the Beat allocated for the following day, using fly only. Early morning fishing, on the Beat allocated, may be permitted under certain conditions but the Manager's permission must be obtained in each case beforehand.
- (11) Fish which are hooked outside the mouth must be returned alive to the water.
- (12) The River Erriff is located in sheep country. Dogs are not allowed on any Beat. Dogs are not permitted in Aasleagh Lodge or Aasleagh Cottage or in the adjoining grounds.
- (13) Anglers must enter the Beat at the Beat sign. Always use pathways, stiles and footbridges, which are provided for your convenience. There is no vehicle access to the river bank.
- (14) Close all gates and do not leave litter. Do not obstruct gateways by parking cars opposite gates.
- (15) All small fish, particularly brown trout and salmon parr should be returned carefully to the water.
- (16) Every angler must complete the Creel Census Sheet on a daily basis.
- (17) Anglers found in breach of these rules may have their fishing permits cancelled.
- (18) **The W.R.F.B. and the Erriff Fishery reserve the right to refuse admission.**
- (19) **The Board cannot vouch for the safe state of the fishery at any time due to changing weather and water conditions and the possible presence of hidden and unknown dangers.**  
**Anglers are warned to exercise the utmost care for their own safety and that of others using this fishery. This offer is issued on the strict understanding that the Board's duty to you and members of your Party is limited to that owed to "Recreational Users" under the Occupiers' Liability Act 1995.**
- (20) **The Minister may consider the introduction of additional conservation measures which may be introduced before or during the season.**

## River Erriff

<i>April 1st – May 31st:</i>	€30 per rod, per day.
<i>June 1st – June 16th:</i>	€50 per rod, per day.
<i>June 17th – July 28th:</i>	€70 per rod, per day.
<i>July 29th – September 30th:</i>	€55 per rod, per day.

### Derrintin and Tawnyard Loughs

*Angling enquiries to Fishery Manager.*

Aasleagh Lodge	High Season €	Low Season €
Weekly Half Board 7 Nights (PPS) * (ensuite)	730	660
Daily Half Board (PPS) * (ensuite)	105	95
Bed & Breakfast (PPS) - (ensuite)	70	60
Bed & Breakfast (PPS) - (standard room)	55	50
Bed & Breakfast - (3 people in triple ensuite room PPS)	60	50
Single Room Supplement 50%		
Killary Suite supplement €15.00 per person per night		
Dinner €35                      Packed Lunch €10		
<b>Special Package for rest of year by arrangement</b>		

\*Includes full Irish breakfast, and evening dinner.

PPS -Per person sharing

	High Season 17th June to 28th July €			Low Season 1st April - 16th June & 29th July to 30th September €		
Accommodation & Fishing Weekly Rates	Single fishing	2 Sharing 1 fishing	2 Sharing 2 fishing	Single fishing	2 Sharing 1 fishing	2 Sharing 2 fishing
<b>7 nights accom. half board</b>	980	1460	1460	870	1300	1300
<b>6 days fishing</b>	420	420	840	180-330	180-330	360-660
<b>Total</b>	1400	1880	2300	1050-1200	1480-1630	1660-1960

### Aasleagh Cottage:

Property hire only, Electricity Extra.

April:	€350 per week.	May:	€450 per week.
June to September:	€600 per week.	Rest of year:	By arrangement.

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

**Accommodation:** 50% deposit on booking.    **Fishing:** 50% deposit on booking.

**Balance:** Payable one month in advance of arrival date.

*Enquiries to: James Stafford, Manager, Aasleagh Lodge, Leenane, Co. Galway.*

Phone +353-95-42252. Fax +353-95-42361. Email: [erriff.fish@iol.ie](mailto:erriff.fish@iol.ie) Website: [www.wrff.ie](http://www.wrff.ie)