

# *Slaney River Trust*

## *2010 News*

### Pretty in pink, but don't splash out on glofish

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**Paul Melia**



*Glofish were originally bred to help detect water pollution but have since been banned across the EU because they pose a danger to native fish species*

WHAT's pink, swims and glows in the dark?  
Genetically modified fish found in a pond in Co Offaly.

And now the owners of the four glofish found by inspectors from the Environmental Protection Agency face the possibility of court action and a fine of up to €3,000 for trying to put something a bit different into their garden. The agency yesterday confirmed that it found transgenic -- or genetically modified -- fish which literally glow in the dark. It is the first time that GM fish have been discovered here.

Called glofish, the offenders are tropical zebra fish about an inch long which contain a gene from a sea coral that makes it a bright pink under normal light and fluorescent under ultraviolet light. They are also bred in green and orange but are illegal in Ireland and the EU because if accidentally released into the wild they could have a detrimental effect on native fish species.

EPA inspectors discovered the fish after being tipped off that glofish had been found in the UK and could be in Ireland. "The EPA is investigating the illegal importation of glofish," it said in a statement. "This happened on foot of notification received that this had happened in the UK and the Netherlands. "There is no impact on human health or the environment," it added. If the agency prosecutes, a fine of up to €3,000 and/or 12 months imprisonment can be imposed in the district court. If the case is heard in the Circuit Court, a fine of up to €15,000 is applicable and/or 10 years in prison.

The EPA confirmed that a "quantity" of fish had been found in Co Offaly and that it was investigating the "deliberate release of GMOs (genetically modified organisms)". Glofish were originally bred to help detect water pollution. Scientists hoped to develop a breed which would light-up in the presence of severe pollution, while remaining unlit when the water was clean.

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