

New Study - Angling worth €0.75 billion to Irish Economy and supporting 10,000 jobs in rural Ireland

Scale and value of Ireland's angling resource greatly under appreciated - Minister O'Dowd

The Minister of State with Responsibility for Natural Resources, Fergus O' Dowd T.D. today warmly welcomed the findings of a new national economic study which has revealed for the first time that angling and angling tourism in Ireland is generating a dividend in excess of €0.75 billion within the Irish economy every year.



The study, commissioned by Inland Fisheries Ireland, shows direct spending on angling in Ireland amounted to €555 million in 2012, with indirect spending worth an additional €200 million and totaling €755 million. Recreational angling was also found to directly support 10,000 existing Irish jobs, many of which are located in the most peripheral and rural parts of the Irish countryside and along our coastline.

The Study found that 406,000 people were involved in recreational angling in Ireland last year, with over 150,000 of these travelling from Northern Ireland and overseas. Over a quarter of a million Irish adults (252,000) held a fishing rod last year with sea angling along with salmon and brown trout angling seen as the most popular categories where domestic anglers are concerned. The quality of the Irish angling product, the friendliness and hospitality of the Irish people and our outstanding scenery were cited amongst the principal attractions of Ireland as an international destination for recreational angling. Tourism angling spend is estimated at approximately €280 million on an annual basis.

Speaking at the launch of the Study entitled ***Socio-Economic Study of Recreational Angling in Ireland*** in the Royal College of Physicians in Kildare Street, the Minister admitted that the findings had come as a surprise, as this was the first national survey which was able to put a value on angling to the Economy and that up till now the economic significance of the sector had been greatly under-estimated. He said the Study not only highlighted to him the major economic impact that angling makes to the Irish economy, but it also underlined the need to continue to protect and nurture this valuable resource, if it is to be allowed to develop and grow to achieve its full potential.

“The results contained in this report are significant” stated Minister O’ Dowd. “Angling, as a recreational pursuit, is a major contributor to the fabric of Irish life in all parts of the country, particularly in rural and peripheral areas. From the industry perspective, the strategic development and marketing of our angling product is essential and has been given new impetus in light of what we now know about the visiting and spending patterns of anglers and what is important in drawing them here. It is equally clear to me that maintaining a strong focus on the protection and conservation of this vital resource into the future, is absolutely key if we are to properly sustain and grow these benefits to anglers, angling businesses and the Irish economy.”

The study, which was commissioned by Inland Fisheries Ireland in early 2012 and undertaken by consultants Tourism Development International, was undertaken to help underpin effective strategic planning and decision making in respect of the angling product's development and marketing.

The following areas are covered in the study:

- Volume, value and economic impact of recreational angling
- Angling categories
- Profile of recreational anglers
- Recreational angling participation patterns
- Motivations and attitudes of recreational anglers
- Benchmarking against competitors

Speaking at the launch, CEO of IFI Dr Ciaran Byrne commented *"IFI will now review the results of the survey in conjunction with our stakeholders. Clearly fish stocks and fish habitat must be conserved, protected and developed. Angling businesses must be given every opportunity to win business and secure and grow the jobs within the sector. IFI is committed to these goals and together with our stakeholders and the support of Government, state agencies and a new angling marketing and development plan we will achieve them."*

The study can be downloaded from www.fisheriesireland.ie/AnglingStudy2013.

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Key Findings

Volume, value and economic Impact of Recreational Angling in Ireland

- Up to 406,000 individuals participated in recreational angling in Ireland in 2012
- Total direct expenditure on recreational angling in 2012 estimated to be €555 million
- Direct expenditure of recreational angling by out-of-state anglers estimated at €121 million
- With indirect and induced impacts, the overall impact of recreational angling is estimated at approximately €755 million
- Total tourist angling expenditure can be estimated at approximately €280 million.
- Recreational angling estimated to support approximately 10,000 jobs.
- The aggregate non-market value of the fishing resource to the Irish public is €58 million per annum
- There is evidence of a decline in recreational angling participation levels in recent years
- Decline in participation attributed to a range of factors including:
 - Economic recession
 - Poor weather
 - Quality of fishing
 - Illegal practices

Profile of Recreational Anglers

- Age profile of recreational anglers is an older one – almost half aged 35 – 54 and 37% aged 55 years +
- Domestic recreational anglers have younger age profile than overseas anglers
- 62% of recreational anglers are from ABC1 socio-economic backgrounds. Proportion of ABC1 higher for British (70%) and Europeans (83%)
- 39% of anglers had travelled with family or friends while 29% travelled alone.

Participation Patterns

- Domestic anglers participating in day fishing trips took an average of 13.6 day angling trips
- One in four domestic anglers took an overnight fishing trip – the average number of overnight trips taken by these anglers was 5.25
- Overseas anglers are very loyal to Ireland and to specific fisheries with individuals returning to the same fishery
- Overseas recreational anglers made an average of two angling trips to Ireland in last 12 months

Motivations and Attitudes

- Respondents identified outstanding scenery and friendliness/ hospitality as the most appealing aspect of Ireland as a destination for recreational angling
- The Irish angling product is also highly rated in terms of:
 - Restful/relaxed ambience
 - Quality of accommodation
 - Reputation of the fishing product
- Over three quarters of anglers considered the overall quality of the Irish angling product to be 'very good' or 'good'
- The perceived decline in fish stocks was cited as the primary reason for dissatisfaction
- Recreational anglers would welcome the following initiatives to improve angling in Ireland
 - More policing of fisheries
 - Increased protection of fish stocks
 - Conservation measures
 - Bank side management

Benchmarking against competitors

- 41% of all recreational anglers have taken a holiday involving angling in other countries in the last 3 years
- Scotland, England, Spain and Scandinavia are the most popular competitor countries visited
- The quality of angling – amount and size of fish – cited as the most appealing aspect of competitor destinations
- Competitor destinations have advantage over Ireland in terms of perceived better management of their fisheries.
- Increase in catch and release

Inland Fisheries Ireland is a statutory body operating under the aegis of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and was established under the Fisheries Act on 1st July 2010. Its principal function is the protection and conservation of the inland fisheries resource. IFI promotes, supports, facilitates and advises the Minister on, the conservation, protection, management, development and improvement of inland fisheries, including sea angling. It also develops and advises the Minister on policy and national strategies relating to inland fisheries and sea angling. www.fisheriesireland.