

Irish Federation of Sea Anglers Submission

With regards to the proposals referred to in section 6 of the proposed Fisheries bill, penalties, I must voice concerns about encapsulating recreational sea anglers in any penalty system.

There is no evidence to support any penalty system to apply to recreational sea anglers, the impact that sea anglers have upon stocks and the environment is quite literally "a drop in the ocean", the majority practicing catch and release, evidenced by the Price Waterhouse 2007 survey, and the AFBI 2012 sea angling survey and also Sport NIs angling survey 2013.

Moreover sea angling has not had any support from government, despite the 1966 NI Fisheries Act stating that " DARD MAY DEVELOP ANGLING", exactly why DARD have chosen only to develop game and coarse angling through DCAL is a mystery and perverse and in my opinion discriminatory.

Both the DCAL and DARD Ministers are on record in the Assembly confirming they spend zero resources on sea angling as they have no responsibility for it, how is it then justifiable or moral to set up a penalty system?

Sea anglers needs to have enough fish to catch to grow the sport have not even been considered by DARD, there are only small fish available that escaped the trawl by accident, I am unaware of any assessment being carried out to assess fish availability for sea anglers, we are left the dregs by commercial overfishing.

Sea angling in Northern Ireland is dying, if a penalty system is introduced now to include sea anglers this will likely accelerate its demise! There was regularly weekend big sea angling shore competitions that attracted over 400 entrants from across the UK and ROI, these same events are now reduced to local sea anglers with often less than 30 competitors! These events brought many spending visitors to coastal areas that were very quiet in winter.

I have met with DARD many times since 2005 and helped to inform them about sea angling, but this has been futile and a one way exercise.

Yours disillusioned

Garry Gregg

Irish Federation of Sea Anglers

Ulster.