

# ESKE FISHERY

## 2007 NEWSLETTER



Including:

- **Report on 2006 season**
  - **Fishery Description**
  - **Angling Information**
- **Fish Counter Information**
- **Accommodation Providers**

## THE ESKE FISHERY



The Eske fishery consists of the 5km River Eske and the 900 acre Lough Eske. The Lough and River are amongst the most picturesque in Donegal set among the Blue Stack and Tawnawully Mountains. Few fisheries can boast such a beautiful backdrop to fish against. The fishery is noted for its spring salmon, grilse, sea trout and char and it is also a productive brown trout fishery. The lough also holds ferox trout, though these have been rarely fished for as a target species. Sea trout angling is at its best from late July onwards. Salmon fishing can be good from 'Easter' to the end of the season with large double figure salmon present throughout the season. With ongoing development work catches have improved in recent years. There has been extensive work on the fishery such as habitat rehabilitation, construction of a fish counter and the creation of a fish pass on the Lowerymore River which has virtually doubled available spawning habitat for salmon. The Lowerymore River above the pass has been seeded with unfed salmon fry for a number of years. In 2005 the first of these fish returned and for the first time, salmon redds were recorded on the Upper Lowerymore River. A dedicated Angling Centre has been built on the shores of the Lough next to Harvey's Point Hotel which services the anglers needs for bookings, Permits, Licences, boat hire etc. Season: The Angling Centre opens on the week prior to Easter and closes on September 30<sup>th</sup> inclusive.

## IMPORTANT 2007 SEASON NEWS!

The Eske Fishery is one of the fisheries **closed for Angling for Salmon and Sea Trout (over 40cm) for 2007** for conservation reasons. Angling for the brown Trout and Sea Trout under 40cm (up to 2¼lb approx) is unaffected. Any Salmon or large Sea Trout (over 40cm) caught by accident are to be returned immediately and carefully to the water.

## ANGLING ON LOUGH ESKE



Spring salmon are present in the Lough from March to the end of the season. Grilse arrive into the Lough from June onwards with the peak of the run occurring fairly evenly spread from July to the end of the season. The main run of sea trout occurs from July on although the some bigger sea trout are present in the Lough much earlier than this. The sea trout average ¾lb but can be as big as 6lb. The brown trout average ½lb but there are good numbers of trout in the 1½ to 2½lb bracket with the odd fish up to 4½lb plus. The biggest brown trout caught in recent years was John Doherty's 9lb 4oz fish which was caught on the fly.

Angling on the Lough is by boat only (no shore fishing allowed) and boats are limited to 2 anglers per boat. 5 boats are available for hire for visitors from the Angling Centre. In the interests of safety all anglers **must** wear a floatation device. Anglers should motor cautiously round any area marked by a buoy. These are placed in the more dangerous areas but not every rock can be marked. Caution is advised for anglers who do not yet know the lough.

Good drifts for salmon include the long drift along the south east shore from the Salmon Rock to the point opposite Roshin Island. This includes the famous 'Ridge' which lies just offshore where the Lowerymore River enters the lough. The drift close inshore along the northwest shore from north of Moylederg Island to the mouth of the Corrabar River in Dog's Head bay is also productive. Salmon can appear all over the lough however as do the Sea trout. Noted drifts for sea trout include the two drifts mentioned above. Also the drift running from O'Donnell's Island to the mouth of the Eske River can be good when the wind is favorable. Ross Dhu point can be good at times. Other notable drifts include the shore running north east from Harvey's Point Hotel and the east shore running south from The Sod bay. This bay, Dogs Head and McNulty's Bay are good bays for sea trout. Also the large bay in front of the Angling Centre can be productive for sea trout and also for brown trout. When fishing this bay anglers should only travel at oar speed in the northern half of this bay since it has numerous large rocks just under the surface!

Fly-fishing and trolling are the most popular methods for salmon with the fly accounting for most sea and brown trout. No prawn or shrimp fishing is allowed. Popular flies on the lough are: Silver Doctor, Bibbio, Connemara Black, Claret Bumble, Green Peter, Octopus, Dabblers (various shades) and Wet Mayflies during the summer. Wet Daddy Longlegs in various shades seem to fish well from summer to the end of the season. Sizes 8 to 12 should suffice for most conditions. The brown trout often show a liking for flies with orange or yellow (summer) in their makeup. The most popular lure for trolling is a Silver or Silver & Blue Toby.

## ANGLING ON THE RIVER ESKE



Salmon run the river from March to the end of the season with the peak of the grilse run occurring in the months of July, August and September. The main sea trout run is from July onwards. The Eske Anglers and the Northern Regional Fisheries Board have recently improved access along the river and have also provided wheelchair friendly access at the Mill Pool. The river is divided into 4 beats with 2 visitor rods permitted on each beat.

Popular stretches of the river include Timony's Turn to the Mill Pool on the outskirts of Donegal Town (beat 4), below and above Miss Jenny's Bridge in the Middle section of the river (beat 2) and at the Eel Weir Turn downstream of Lough Eske Bridge (beat 1). Fly fishing and spinning are the most popular angling methods on the fishery depending on water heights. No prawn or shrimp fishing is allowed. For spinning a Flying 'C' in varying colours or a Blue and Silver Devon are the most effective baits on the river. Popular flies include the Fiery Brown, Jacob's Ladder, Donegal Blue, Dark Mackerel or any of the shrimp patterns such as Curry's Red Shrimp, Foxford Shrimp etc. A sinking line is usually preferable early in the season to fish the fly deep until the water warms when a floating line will be used for most fishing. A sink tip is useful when the river is running a little high or on some of the faster flowing pools to stop the fly 'dragging' near the surface. Most anglers fish a single handed rod since the river is not wide. A 12' or 12' 6" double handed fly rod can be an advantage due to the extra power if playing a good fish in high water.

## ESKE ANGLING CENTRE

The Eske Angling Centre is located on the south western shore of Lough Eske next to Harvey's Point Hotel. Permits and Licenses are issued from the centre and bookings for boats and beats can be taken for fishing both the Lough and River.

**Season:** The Angling Centre is open from Monday of the week preceding Easter to the 30<sup>th</sup> September.

**Hours of Business:** The Angling Centre is open from 9am to 1pm, 7 days a week during the season.



### Permits:

Adult Day Permit on River - €30

Juvenile Day Permit - €12

Weekly Permit (7 days) - €150

Boat with 1 angler (Lough) - €50

Boat with 2 anglers (Lough) - €80

Boat & Engine - €40

**Licenses:** You must have one of the following Salmon & Sea Trout State licences if you wish to fish for salmon or sea trout on the Eske Fishery: A full year state licence €128, a Ballyshannon district year licence €60, a 21day-licence €48, a day licence €34, or a juvenile full year licence €20.

## 2006 SEASON REPORT

### April.

The fishery opened on the 10<sup>th</sup> April for the Easter weekend. Conditions were good over the first week with good water in the river. The levels then fell away over the third week to low water levels by the 22<sup>nd</sup>. Levels remained low to the end of the month except for a small fresh on the 25<sup>th</sup> / 26<sup>th</sup>. The month was fairly quiet despite the good water levels with only 4 visiting anglers fishing. No salmon were recorded just fair catches of brown trout.

### May.

The month brought many days of good water on the river except for the second week of the month that gave low water levels. Despite the good conditions, only 3 visiting anglers fished for the month. The first salmon of the season was recorded by local angler John Hanna caught on the 10<sup>th</sup>. The fish weighed 11lb and was caught on a Toby spinner from 'The Ridge'. Albert Johnston recorded a 7lb salmon caught on the 21<sup>st</sup> on the troll from Ard-na-Mona. Anthony O'Malley Daly had a good day on the 27<sup>th</sup> with 2 salmon caught. The fish weighed 7 and 12lb and were caught on a Toby spinner from 'The Ridge'. Average weight of salmon caught for the month being 9.25lbs.

## June.



The month was once again very dry and gave very low water conditions for the whole month except for a slow rise to good levels by the 22<sup>nd</sup>. By the 26<sup>th</sup> the river was back to low levels. Only 13 visiting anglers fished for the month, 2 on the river and 11 on the Lough. Despite all the low water conditions there was a good run of spring fish. It was amazing to see fresh sea-liced fish well up the river and to look at sections of bed rock with trickles of water running over them that constituted the river! That double figure salmon physically navigated the river in these conditions was impressive. Average size of caught salmon for the month was 9.54lbs.

David Martin recorded a 12lb salmon caught on the 10<sup>th</sup> from the Lough. Anthony O'Malley Daly recorded salmon of 5½ and 12lb caught from the Lough on the 14<sup>th</sup> on the fly also recording an 8lb fish the following day also caught on the fly from the Lough. Albert Johnston accounted for 3 fish weighing 8, 9 & 9½lb caught on a spinner. Best fish of the month was John Hanna's 15lb salmon caught on the fly from the Lough (McNeely's) on the 22<sup>nd</sup>. On the 23<sup>rd</sup>, John Wilson recorded a 12lb salmon caught from the Lough on a spinner. John Doherty accounted for a 7lb grilse caught on the fly from 'The Ridge'. On the 26<sup>th</sup>, John Hanna accounted for a 7lb grilse caught on the Lough on a fly.

## July.

July was very dry once again this year. We received only one flood which occurred on the 9<sup>th</sup> and gave us good water until the 12<sup>th</sup>. The rest of the month the fishery was at very low levels. The month was understandably quiet with only 12 visiting anglers fishing, 7 on the Lough and 5 on the river. There were a number of sea trout and salmon recorded from the Lough but with no great angling attendance, catches were not high. Numbers of sea trout ascending the fishery were disappointingly low. Liam McAuley and Aidrian O'Donnell fishing in the same boat recorded 3 salmon to 11lb caught on the Lough on the 30<sup>th</sup> returning 2 of these.

## August.

August was fairly dry as well with low levels for the greater part of the month. We did not receive a good flood until the 30<sup>th</sup> which raised the fishery to high levels by the last day of the month. 27 visiting rods fished for the month, 23 on the Lough and 4 on the River. There was a good run of grilse throughout the month, despite the periods of low water on the river and this was reflected in catches. Average size of salmon for the month was 5.09lb. The run of sea trout was very disappointing for the month.

It was great to see Arthur Duplan, a 10 year old visiting Swiss angler catch his first ever salmon. The fish weighed 5lb and was caught on the fly no less from the Lough. This was lovely to see since his parents had informed us his dream was to catch a salmon when in Ireland. With no coastline, salmon are not easy to come by in Switzerland! John Doherty who guided young Arthur also recorded another 5lb grilse caught on the fly. Liam McAuley recorded 2 grilse caught from the river on the 25<sup>th</sup>. The fish weighed 4 & 8lb with one of these released. He also recorded grilse of 5, 8 & 7lb caught from the river on the 26<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> respectively. I accounted for 2 grilse to 8lb caught on the fly from the river and released. There were numerous records of single grilse caught.

## September.

The month was a big improvement on the rest of the summer. With plenty of rainfall there were good water levels throughout the month. In fact the river was too high on certain days! The fishery was somewhat busier with 50 visiting rods fishing, 47 on the Lough and 3 on the river. Average size of salmon for the month was 6.30lb. Given here is a selection of the catches. Francey Murphy recorded 2 grilse caught on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month. The fish weighed 4 & 7½lb and were caught from the river on a spinner. On the 5<sup>th</sup>, Liam McAuley recorded a lovely 10lb salmon caught from the River (Fox's Pool) on the fly. On the 9<sup>th</sup>, Edward Dewael recorded a 7lb salmon caught from the Lough on the fly and hooked and lost a further 3! On the 17<sup>th</sup>, Adrian O'Donnell and Liam Boylan fishing from the same boat recorded salmon of 8 & 9lb caught on the spinner. There were numerous records of single fish caught.

### OFFICIALLY RECORDED SALMON 10LB or OVER 2006

CAPTOR	DATE	LOCATION	METHOD	WEIGHT
John Hanna	2 <sup>nd</sup> June	Lough	Fly	15lb
Anthony O'Malley Daly	27 <sup>th</sup> May	Lough	Spinner	12lb
David Martin	10 <sup>th</sup> June	Lough	Spinner	12lb
Anthony O'Malley Daly	14 <sup>th</sup> June	Lough	Fly	12lb
John Wilson	23 <sup>rd</sup> June	Lough	Spinner	12lb
John Hanna	10 <sup>th</sup> May	Lough	Spinner	11lb
Adrian O'Donnell	30 <sup>th</sup> July	Lough	?	11lb
Liam McAuley	29 <sup>th</sup> August	River	Fly	10lb

Average overall weight of salmon for the season was exactly 7.00lb.

## MOST POPULAR METHOD



This is calculated based on the recorded salmon caught where the lure was stated. The fly was the most popular method with 57.5% of the salmon caught on the same. The remaining 42.5% were caught on the spinner. No salmon were recorded taken on the worm.



### ILLEGAL METHODS

Anglers are reminded that shrimp, prawn and roe baits are illegal; any angler found using illegal baits, **will** be prosecuted.



## ESKE FISH COUNTER

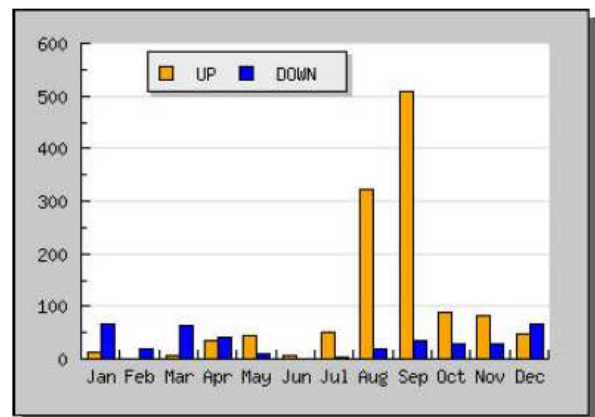


The fish counter installed is a three-channel resistivity (Logie) Fish Counter installed on a dual crump weir with a central fish pass. Under low flow conditions, fish passage is restricted to the central fish pass. During higher water conditions the two crump weirs automatically commence logging any fish passage once sufficient water is spilling over the weir faces. To assess the performance of the counter, one of the crump weirs and the central fish pass is monitored by cameras to verify readings of fish passing over the weir. The design of the weirs and fish pass ensures fish swim close to the electrodes when ascending or descending the counter. Electrodes are set onto the surface of the crump weirs and fish pass. The electrodes register the difference in the resistivity as a fish passes over them.

The counter is set at present to record any fish of 35cm or longer. The counter will record salmon or sea trout of this length or over. The counter recalibrates itself every half hour to take into account changing environmental conditions such as water height and water conductivity due to floods etc.

*Total counts for 2006*

Date	Up	Down
January	12	65
February	1	20
March	7	63
April	34	40
May	43	11
June	5	0
July	51	4
August	323	19
September	509	35
October	89	27
November	81	30
December	46	67
	1201	381



*Monthly counts, up and downstream*

## SALMON TAGGING SCHEME



All anglers are legally required to tag and record all salmon and any sea trout over 40cm in length. Each angler will be issued 1 to 5 plastic gill tags and a logbook when they purchase a salmon & sea trout rod licence.

*All salmon and any sea trout over 40cm in length must be tagged immediately and recorded in the logbook. Any farmed salmon caught by an angler is considered to be a "wild Fish" and should be tagged. It is an offence to be in possession of an untagged salmon (or sea trout over 40cm) on the riverbank or elsewhere.*

Tags must be inserted through the gills and mouth and securely fixed. It is an offence to be in possession of a salmon or sea trout over 40cm that is untagged. The tag number, size of fish and catch

location must be entered into the logbook. Logbooks must be made available to authorised fisheries officers on request.

Anglers found with untagged fish or failing to produce a logbook or licence on request will be issued with an **on the spot fine of €65** or prosecuted.

Extra tags are issued when an angler produces their logbook detailing their catch & usage of Tags. If a logbook or tags are lost or damaged the loss or damage must be reported to an authorised distributor.

**Logbooks and unused tags must be returned to the N.R.F.B. within a period of 21 days from the date of the expiry of the license.**

## CONSERVATION of SALMON / SEA TROUT STOCKS & ROD ANGLING QUOTAS.

There is an angling bag limit of 10 fish per angler of salmon (any size) or sea trout (over 40cm) per season. **Subject to the maximum annual bag limit of 10 fish an angler may take:**

- A total of 1 salmon (any size) or sea trout (over 40cm) from the start of the season to the 12<sup>th</sup> May (**1 fish in total may be retained for this period**).
- 3 salmon (any size) or sea trout (over 40cm) per day from 13<sup>th</sup> May to 31<sup>st</sup> August.
- 1 salmon (any size) or sea trout (over 40cm) per day from the 1<sup>st</sup> September to the end of the season on 30<sup>th</sup> September.

After the daily bag limit has been taken, anglers are permitted to fish catch and release **using single, barbless hooks and there is a ban on the use of worms.**

This basically means that anglers are limited to killing 10 salmon per year or less if sea trout of more than 40cm are killed since these are included in the 10 fish allowed per year.

## ESKE FISHERY DEVELOPMENT



The Northern Regional Fisheries Board has carried out development work on the Eske Fishery since 1995. This includes the purchase of the private part of the fishery from Lord Arran including the purchase and withdrawal of netting rights on the Eske estuary. The board, jointly with the Eske Angling Association, has improved angling access on the fishery. This consists of the provision of stiles, walkways etc and the provision of a disabled angling section at the Mill Pool. In-stream habitat rehabilitation has been undertaken. This consists of creation of angling pools and refurbishment of spawning and juvenile salmonid areas. A dedicated angling centre has been constructed on the shores of Lough Eske. A fish pass has been constructed on the Lowerymore River (main tributary feeding the lough) at the impassable falls at the White Goat's Island. This has practically doubled the available spawning for salmon and sea trout. The Lowerymore River above this pass has been seeded over 4 years with indigenous un-fed salmon fry reared in a purpose built hatchery. This work is still ongoing and is undertaken as necessary.

In 2006 a fish ladder was constructed alongside the Borland Fish Pass and fish can now ascend the Lowerymore River more easily. Leading up to winter, good numbers of salmon were seen ascending the ladder and this bodes well for the establishment of a self sustaining population of salmon in the Upper Lowerymore Catchment.

## ACCOMMODATION

### HOTELS

- Harvey's Point Hotel, Lough Eske, Donegal, Co. Donegal. Tel: 074 9722208.  
Email: [info@harveyspoint.com](mailto:info@harveyspoint.com) Web: [www.harveyspoint.com](http://www.harveyspoint.com)
- Mill Park Hotel, The Mullins, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal. Tel: 074 9722880.  
Email: [info@millparkhotel.com](mailto:info@millparkhotel.com) Web: [www.millparkhotel.com](http://www.millparkhotel.com)

### BED & BREAKFAST.

- Mrs Shona McNeice, Lakeland B & B, Birchill, Lough Eske, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal.  
Tel & Fax: 074 9722481. Email: [mcneice@gofree.indigo.ie](mailto:mcneice@gofree.indigo.ie) Web: [www.lakelandbedandbreakfast.com](http://www.lakelandbedandbreakfast.com)
- Mrs Noreen McGinty, The Arches Country House, Lough Eske, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal.  
Tel & Fax: 074 9722029. Email: [archescountryhse@eircom.net](mailto:archescountryhse@eircom.net) Web: [www.archescountryhse.com](http://www.archescountryhse.com)
- Mrs Mary McGinty, Ardeevin, Lough Eske, Barnesmore, Donegal, Co. Donegal.  
Tel & Fax: 074 9721790. Email: [seanmcginty@eircom.net](mailto:seanmcginty@eircom.net)
- Ann McGlinchey, Eas Dun Lodge, Greenans, Lough Eske, Donegal, Co. Donegal.  
Tel: 074 9722628 Email: [info@easdunlodge.com](mailto:info@easdunlodge.com) Web: [www.easdunlodge.com](http://www.easdunlodge.com)
- Avalon, The Haugh, Lough Eske, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal.  
Tel: 074 9721949 Email: [justaggie@eircom.net](mailto:justaggie@eircom.net)
- Heeneys Lodge, Killymard, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal. Tel: 074 9723048.  
Email: [breda@heeneyslodge.com](mailto:breda@heeneyslodge.com) Web: [www.heeneyslodge.com](http://www.heeneyslodge.com)
- G. McGettigan, Rhu-Gorse, Lough Eske, Donegal, Co Donegal. Tel: (074) 9721685.

### SELF CATERING.

- Mairead McNulty, Heenys, Lough Eske, Co. Donegal. Tel: 074 9721746 & 087 7941234.
- Corrakille House, Old Laghy Road, Donegal Town, County Donegal. Tel: 074 9722052.  
Fax: 074 9722468. Email: [martinpc@iol.ie](mailto:martinpc@iol.ie) Web: [www.corrakille-house.com](http://www.corrakille-house.com)
- The Mullins, Donegal Town, Co. Donegal. Tel: 074 9723836 or 087 2813209.  
Email: [ashwoodapts@eircom.net](mailto:ashwoodapts@eircom.net)
- Cullionboy, Barnesmore, Co. Donegal. Tel: 074 9722298 or 086 3078282.