Opening day was marked by fine settled weather, however the river was in high flood with all 16 gates open. For the second year in succession no fishing took place on Opening Day at the Weir, with many of the anglers preferring to partake in the hot food and beverages on offer, and recounting tales from yesteryear with old friends in the angling lodge.

Angling conditions during February and March were generally poor with fluctuating water levels and unsettled weather for much of the period. Consequently angling effort was low with few rods fishing.

The 2015 angling season on the Weir was once again interesting in many respects. The early part of the season was generally mixed from an angling perspective, with adverse water conditions and numbers of spring salmon low in the system. That, coupled with biting cold northerly winds at times did not assist the angling effort. The onset of April saw water conditions and temperatures improve somewhat, but levels generally remained high for all but the last few days of the month.

Water levels were ideal from early May, but unsettled weather resulted in water levels fluctuating between 4 – 6 sluice gates during the first three weeks. Some decent spring salmon were recorded during May, but overall the run of fish was generally low in the system. From around mid-May grilse started to appear in the catch in reasonable numbers, which has not been the trend in recent years on the Fishery.

June saw a complete transformation, with good numbers of grilse appearing on tides into the Fishery. Water levels dropped to one sluice gate from the 12th onwards, and anglers enjoyed tremendous sport, especially fly-fishing enthusiasts for the remainder of the month. This trend continued into July with lively sport being had by anglers, with no end to the grilse run in sight. After a period of inclement weather from mid-July water levels rose to 4 gates from 20th onwards and a noticeable decline in catches occurred, despite good numbers of fish still present in the system.

Unfortunately angling conditions deteriorated in August /September with wet weather keeping water levels fluctuating between 4 – 11 gates, which proved hugely disappointing for anglers and all concerned. As a result little or no angling effort took place on the Fishery during the last two months of the season.
**First Salmon**

The first salmon of the season was landed by local angler Eoin Trill on March 24th just before lunch-time in Jimmy’s Pool (Weir Pool). The fresh-run spring salmon was caught on floated shrimp and tipped the scales at 4.22kg (9.5lbs). Despite Eoin having achieved this accolade previously, he was determined to catch the first salmon of the season on the Weir in 2015, upon returning to angling again after experiencing serious health issues the year before. As is customary, the first fish was donated to a local charity, the recipient this year was the Galway Hospice Foundation.

**April**

Angling conditions during early April were not ideal with 10 sluice gates open, dropping to 4 gates from the 7th giving reasonable prospects for angling. This level was maintained until the last few days of the month when levels dropped to 2 gates. Despite reasonably good angling conditions during the month catches overall were generally low, with a total of 10 fish recorded averaging 4.15kg (9.35lbs). The catch was 8 salmon and two grilse (fish under 8lbs), of which 2 were taken on fly, 5 on shrimp and 3 spinning, all wild fish. The heaviest fish for the month was recorded on April 12th by Dublin angler Leo Casey, caught on fly, tipping the scales at 5.95lbs (13.4lbs).

**May**

Angling conditions during the first few days were good with 2 sluice gates open on the Weir. Unsettled weather thereafter brought water levels up, and fluctuated between 4 and 6 gates up to the 25th of the month. This disrupted fishing, especially fly-fishing with numbers of fish recorded down on previous seasons. The spring run was generally poor again this year, but some decent fish were recorded during the month, with the average weight slightly up on 2014. Fifty six fish were recorded for the month; 20 spring salmon averaging 4.59kg (10.33lbs) and 36 grilse averaging 2.43kg (5.47lbs).

The heaviest fish recorded was a fresh-run spring salmon that tipped the scales at 6.22kg (14lbs), caught by Joseph O’Brien from London while spinning from the east bank. Spinning accounted for 18 fish, 15 on fly, and 23 on shrimp. From that total 55 were wild and 1 ranched/tagged fish, with 2 fish released by anglers.

**June**

Angling conditions from early June were mixed with water levels increasing from 2 to 4 sluice gates open on the Weir. Levels dropped back to one gate from the 12th onwards, making ideal conditions for angling, especially fly-fishing enthusiasts. The grilse run throughout the month provided excellent sport with many anglers reaching their bag limit of 3 fish in a session. The good run of fish into the system continued throughout the month of June on the Fishery, and demand for angling was high. A total of 426 fish were recorded for the month, including 6 salmon averaging 4.03kg (9.08 lbs) and 420 grilse averaging 2.11kg (4.75lbs). The heaviest fish recorded was a fresh run salmon of 4.66kg (10.5lbs) caught on fly by John Ryan from Co. Tipperary. The most successful method was fly with 311 fish recorded, followed by shrimp (107), and 8 spinning. Out of that total 37 fish were ranched/micro-tagged, with 58 fish released by anglers.
Conditions from the start of July were ideal with one sluice gate open on the Weir. Anglers continued to enjoy excellent sport, with a good number reaching the daily bag limit. After a period of wet weather from the second week onwards, water levels started to rise in the catchment, and from the 14th levels went to 2 sluice gates on the Weir. Levels continued to rise, and from the 20th onwards 4 gates were open to the end of the month. It was noticeable that catches declined somewhat thereafter, though good numbers of fish were present in the system. Despite the adverse water conditions from mid-July onwards catches were good with a total of 308 fish recorded. The catch consisted of 3 salmon averaging 4.59kg (10.33lbs) and 305 grilse averaging 2.07kg (4.66lbs). From that total 10 fish were tagged/ranched, with 38 wild fish released by anglers. Fly-fishing accounted for 229, shrimp 77 fish and 2 were caught spinning. Best fish recorded for the month was a fresh-run sea-liced cock salmon caught on fly by John Liddy from Co. Clare tipping the scales at 6.0kg (13.5lbs).

The spring fishing season was somewhat frustrating from an angling perspective, as were the last two months of the season. Weather and water conditions during these periods disrupted angling on the Fishery, and at the back end brought the season to a premature end. But like every season has its ups and downs, so comes the special days when anglers experience great days on the riverbank. The months of June and July provided excellent angling for grilse on the Fishery. Good numbers of fish entered the river on the tides, and some wonderful sport was to be had at times, especially on the fly. In that respect the Fishery was fortunate, as the good run of grilse into the Galway Fishery was not replicated throughout the country. The catch recorded for the season on the Weir was 802 fish, a mixture of grilse and salmon. On the beats downstream and above the Weir, the estimated catch was 265 fish, bringing the total to 1,067 for the season. Yes indeed, fishing can be strange at times - while some anglers experienced frustrating outings during the season, some had days they will never forget.

Inclement weather during both months resulted in fluctuating water levels on the Fishery, ranging from 4 to 11 sluice gates open on the Weir. The majority of fish resident in the system had migrated upstream due to this variation in water levels. As a result little or no angling effort took place during the last two months of the season on the Fishery.

Local anglers fishing above the weir and downstream also experienced frustrating times during the early spring and back end of the season. The weather pattern disrupted spring fishing with cold biting winds at times, and low air temperatures in March/April, followed by high water levels in May just when reasonable numbers of spring salmon were starting to appear in the river. Better days were to come, however, with settled water levels from mid-June and throughout most of July, and anglers enjoying good sport during this period on the downstream beat. Angling effort was minimal on the beat above the Weir, due to the presence of green weed for a large portion of the season. Fluctuating water levels in August/September brought their season to an abrupt end.

The catch from the beats for the season was estimated at around 265 fish.
In conjunction with the smolt tagging programme on the Fishery and Cong Hatchery, adult salmon returning to the river were monitored throughout the season. All fish caught on the rod were checked for the presence of the adipose fin near the tail. If the fin was missing the fish was checked to see if a micro-tag was present in the nose by a staff member. Sampling also took place throughout the season with other salmon caught, wild or hatchery, to check on lengths/weights, scale samples etc. This information gives an indication of length of time spent at sea, feeding patterns and DNA profiles of the salmon. Up to the end of July a total of 48 fin-clipped/micro-tagged fish were recorded in the catch on the Fishery. This represents 6% of the overall catch recorded for the season on the Weir.

On March 18th-20,000+ smolts from Cong Hatchery were released into the lower River Corrib at Dangan & Menlo Pier. A further 40,000+ were released into the Cong River. The fish were micro-tagged and fin-clipped before release. The smolt trap was operational from April 7th after water levels dropped to 4 sluice gates, to monitor migration of smolts downstream to the sea. By the end of April a total of 4,446 smolts were fin-clipped and micro-tagged. Hatchery smolts released from Cong Hatchery in late March were included in the catch from the trap (approximately 7.5% of smolts counted). The smolt trap was operational during the month of May, but fluctuating water levels (2 to 6 gates) meant that the trap was not functional at various times during the month.

Up to the 26th of May 2,438 wild smolts were fin-clipped and micro-tagged. Since the trap was opened in April, and up to the 26th May a total of 6,298 wild smolts were fin-clipped and micro-tagged. Hatchery smolts released from Cong Hatchery in late March accounted for approximately 12% of smolts in the trap.

Sea trout numbers were generally low during the season. Up to the end of May water levels fluctuated up and down with numbers difficult to assess, as angling was restricted at times due to high water conditions. From mid-June onwards levels stabilised at one gate up to the third week in July. Water levels fluctuated thereafter for the remainder of the season and it was difficult to observe numbers of fish present in the system. While staff observed some small numbers of decent size sea-trout on the camera in the Weir Pool, and anglers encountered some sea-trout while fishing for salmon, numbers overall were generally poor.

### Sea Trout

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- Up to the end of May water levels fluctuated up and down with numbers difficult to assess.
- From mid-June onwards levels stabilised at one gate up to the third week in July.

### Stocking & Salmon Smolt Tagging

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- A further 40,000+ were released into the Cong River.
- The fish were micro-tagged and fin-clipped before release.

### Tag Recovery

- In conjunction with the smolt tagging programme on the Fishery and Cong Hatchery, adult salmon returning to the river were monitored throughout the season.
- All fish caught on the rod were checked for the presence of the adipose fin near the tail. If the fin was missing, the fish was checked to see if a micro-tag was present in the nose by a staff member.
- Sampling also took place throughout the season with other salmon caught, wild or hatchery, to check on lengths/weights, scale samples etc.
- This information gives an indication of length of time spent at sea, feeding patterns and DNA profiles of the salmon.
- Up to the end of July a total of 48 fin-clipped/micro-tagged fish were recorded in the catch on the Fishery. This represents 6% of the overall catch recorded for the season on the Weir.

### Fish Counter

- The counter in the fish pass was operational during the season, and provided information on the numbers of fish migrating upstream using the pass.
- In early spring water levels fluctuated during April & May, so information on fish migration was sketchy during that period.
- From June onwards water levels stabilised at one gate, and this level was maintained until the third week in July when water levels again rose after a period of inclement weather.
- This pattern continued during August and September, which meant that the counter was not fully operational.
The official opening of the Fisheries Watchtower located adjacent to Wolfe Tone Bridge took place on Friday 27th March at 2.30pm at Jury’s Inn Hotel, Galway. The Tower was officially opened by the President of Ireland, Mr. Michael D. Higgins, after being given a guided tour of the Museum housed in the Fisheries Tower. A large attendance of invited guests was present for the occasion, jointly organised by Inland Fisheries Ireland and Duchas na Gaillimhe (Galway Civic Trust).

“During his speech President Higgins spoke about heritage in all its many forms: in that it intensifies our sense of place and identity. Not only does it connect us to our past, to the generations gone before, but gives texture and depth to our shared present, inviting us to consciously and creatively handle and mend that with which we wish to pass on to the generations to come.”

Since the Fisheries Watchtower opened its doors again to the public on July 1st 2014 it has become a significant visitor experience location on the tourist trail in Galway City. During 2015 some 14,228 people passed through the doors of the Watchtower. Such was the level of interest from the general public that the building remained open throughout the Autumn/Winter periods. For Health & safety reasons, due to high flooding on the River Corrib, the building was closed during the month of December.

Downstream along the east bank we see a boat pulled up on the shore-line, just upstream from a timber access ladder along the wall. The boat was used by anglers fishing from the corner to the bridge (mainly during periods of low flow). The boat was operated by a ghillie that manoeuvred it by means of a rope around a stake/pole in the river-bed. This afforded the angler the opportunity to cover the salmon lies to the bridge, without having to wade in the river.

In the 1950's as part of the Arterial Drainage Works carried out by the Office of Public Works in the Corrib System, the river-bed was substantially altered, and fourteen Hydraulically Operated Sluice Gates were installed to control water discharge from the Western Lakes of Corrib, Mask, Carra, and their tributaries. A new fish pass was constructed in the middle of the Weir, replacing the ladder/ pass on the west bank. While the vista looking upstream has somewhat changed from that period, some endearing characteristics of the Galway Weir remain for the enjoyment of all concerned.

Our trip down memory lane this year brings us back to circa 1940’s on the Galway Fishery. The photograph below was taken from the West Bridge (Salmon Weir Bridge) looking upstream towards the Weir. On the left we see a person fishing along the pathway and above them in the background Weir Lodge and the fish pass/ladder, which was adjacent to the Weir Pool. The Weir itself was mainly constructed as an overspill, with a timber walkway/gantry to provide access to the east bank. Two timber sluice gates (manually operated) controlled the water levels on the Corrib System. They had been constructed in the 1860’s during arterial drainage works carried out by the Board of Works, and are still operational today. Above the Weir we can see the cut stone pillars that supported the Railway Bridge for the Galway – Clifden railway line, the Railway Bridge itself having earlier been dismantled and sold as scrap metal to Hammond Lane Company for the sum of £10.00. The vista beyond shows the green fields of Terryland and the Headford Road, which today are part of the housing estates of Tirellan & Coolough.

President Michael D. Higgins, with his wife Sabina and staff and board members of IFI and Galway Civic Trust, at the opening of the Fisheries Watchtower Museum.

Down Memory Lane

Fisheries Watchtower

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Salmon Regulations 2016

The 2016 season will again see some changes on the angling front with revised quotas for both multi-sea winter (spring salmon) and grilse. The quota for the season for the entire Corrib Catchment with a combined quota for multi-sea winter fish (spring salmon) and grilse is 5,227 fish, which is an increase on the 2015 figure. Bag limits for the 2016 season will be the same as recent years, with a bag limit of 1 spring salmon per day from February 1st to May 11th and 3 fish per day from May 12th to August 31st, and 1 fish per day during September, with a total bag limit of 10 fish for the season. As in previous years catch & release will be in operation once bag limits have been reached, depending on the circumstances at the time. This may be revised during the season at the discretion of local management. It should be noted that regulations and bye-laws may be subject to change.

Fishery News

As the year draws to a close and a new season beckons, perhaps it is timely that we look back and remember those that have passed on during the year.

On January 16th the death was announced of Brian (Breen) Keoghan from Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan. He was a regular on the Galway Fishery for many years, and was always very engaging with fellow anglers and staff. He was involved in the meat trade for many years, and ran a very successful retail butcher’s business on the Main Street in Carrick during the 1980’s.

He was a keen outdoors man, engaging in both fishing and shooting down the years, and travelled widely throughout the country to engage in both pursuits. On the fishing front, he had a great affinity for both trout and salmon fishing, and might be found on lakes/rivers throughout the West of Ireland, or on Lough Sheelin in Co. Cavan. He derived great satisfaction in seeing the resurgence of Sheelin once again in recent times as a premier trout fishery, and would recount great stories of fishing “the spent” with friends and colleagues on magic evenings on the lough. He was well known throughout the country in many circles, as was evident with the large crowds in attendance at his reposing and funeral mass.

On September 27th the death was announced of Raymond McIntyre Snr – Dublin Road Mullingar Co. Westmeath. Ray rarely, if ever missed a season fishing on the Galway Weir over the years, despite having to contend with on-going health issues. When he arrived to Galway, the pleasure he derived from being able to come “to fish the Weir” was immediately apparent by the look in his eyes. He managed to fish the Weir during the summer before his passing in September.

He was a native of Bailieborough in Co. Cavan, but left his native county in the 60’s, first settling in Loughrea, Co. Galway for a period before moving to Mullingar, where he put down permanent roots with his family. On the business front he was involved in the motor trade and he established Westmeath Motors Ltd in 1976 with his wife Marcella, which became a successful family enterprise over the years.

He was a keen angler and shooting man, and his reasons for opting to move to Mullingar were carefully crafted, as two of the most prolific trout lakes in the country at that time were situated close by, Loughs Ennell and Owel. He spent many happy hours on both waters, as he did on his beloved Lough Sheelin in Co. Cavan as well.

As the year draws to a close and a new season beckons, we remember Brian and Ray fondly, and have them, and those that have passed on before in our thoughts.

We will ring in the new season, and raise our glasses “to absent friends” and colleagues.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a n-anam dílis
## Rod Angling Fees 2016

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<th>Period</th>
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<td>Sep 1 - Sep 30</td>
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### Fishing Times:
From February 1st fishing will be free for regular patrons until the first salmon is caught, thereafter normal angling fees will apply. IFI will donate the first salmon to a local charity of its choice. Normal fishing day is from 9.00am to 7.00 pm. Half days are available from 9.00am to 2.00pm or from 2.00pm to 7.00 pm. Between June 1st to July 16th (inclusive) there will be two angling sessions per day, i.e. from 6.00am to 1.00pm and from 1.30pm to 8.30pm.

### Deposits/Full Fees:
Booking requests that are received are allocated rods subject to availability. If you receive an offer of angling, deposits/full fees must be paid within 14 days of the receipt of the offer. Otherwise it will be assumed that the offer is not being taken up and the rod(s) will be reallocated to another angler on the waiting list. For bookings during the peak season between June 1st-July 16th inclusive, full fees must be paid to secure the booking(s). For all other times outside of this period, a 50% deposit is required. Please note: Deposits/Full Fees are non-refundable.

### Evening Fishing (Fly Only):
Evening fishing starts on April 1st until September 30th. April 1st to July 16th - €30 per rod. July 17th to September 30th - €25 per rod. Between June 1st-July 16th inclusive fishing is from 8.30pm to 11.00pm. All other times 7.00pm to 10.00pm. A bag limit of 1 fish per angler will apply to evening fishing.

### Advance Bookings
Applications for rod bookings should be made before the start of the season (Feb 1st) by mail, fax or email to:
The Manager, Galway Fishery, Weir Lodge, Earl’s Island, Galway
Tel. +353-91-562388 Fax: +353-91-362930 Email: seamus.hartigan@fisheriesireland.ie

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### Fishery Regulations

#### Licences:
Before an angler can fish a current State salmon angling licence must be produced. Licences can be purchased at the Fishery Office.

#### Fly Only Rule:
During low water conditions (at a level to be determined by the Fishery Manager) a fly only rule will apply on the Fishery.

#### Polaroids:
Polaroid glasses are only permitted to be used by anglers fly-fishing on the Fishery.

#### Bag Limits:
There is a national bag limit of 10 fish per angler on rivers that are open for salmon angling. From the start of the season on February 1st to May 11th inclusive, a daily bag limit of 1 salmon per angler will apply, up to a maximum of 3 salmon during that period. From May 12th to August 31st a bag limit of 3 fish per day applies. During September a bag limit of 1 fish per day applies. A bag limit of 2 fish on prawn/shrimp fishing or spinning will apply from May 12th to August 31st. After the above bag limits or the quota has been reached, anglers may be permitted to fish catch & release using single barbless hooks, subject to certain restrictions depending on circumstances i.e. water temperature, height, etc. Angling methods, bag limits, catch & release policy may be revised during the season at the discretion of local management. All fish caught must be recorded, and tagged if retained, with details given to Fishery Staff. It should be noted that regulations and bye-laws may be subject to change.

#### Foul Hooked Fish:
All foul hooked fish must be returned to the river under Bye-Law No. 847/2008. In the case of badly damaged or exhausted fish that cannot be revived, they must be handed up to Fishery Staff. Failure to comply will result in anglers being banned from the Fishery.

#### Protocol on the River:
(a) Anglers should fish the river down step by step and when at the bridge, cease fishing, go upstream and start again.
(b) Fly anglers wading from the east bank have right of way while fishing down the river
(c) Anglers must alternate in Jimmy’s (Weir) Pool after one hour’s fishing

N.B. During inclement weather it is advisable to contact the Fishery for information on conditions before travelling.

The Galway Fishery and Inland Fisheries Ireland reserve the right to refuse access to the Fishery.

IFI 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 the fishery. This offer is based on the strict understanding that IFI’s duty to you is limited to that owed to “recreational users” under the Occupiers Liability Act 1995.