

## Salmon Watch Ireland

27 January 2025

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## Update 27 January 2025

This week has witnessed a catastrophic storm which saw storm-force winds and heavy rainfall. It is a situation which may have consequences for salmonid survival, especially ova deposited in the many catchments around the country. The extraordinary spates witnessed here in south Kerry where I am based will certainly impact on survival with large scale gravel movement. Catchments with lakes within their systems should be less affected, and hopefully with spring weather to come, we should see a more benign weather regime.

We would like to draw your attention to several news items this week. Firstly, Alexandra Morton and her research paper discussing the removal of salmon farms in British Columbia which we believe is highly significant. Inland Fisheries Ireland reported a mystery salmon entering the Erriff which was tagged in Greenland in September 2023. We discuss ongoing efforts to research salmon survival at sea particularly in Greenland.

**British Columbia Salmon Farm Removal – Chum Salmon Explosion where salmon farms were removed prior to juvenile migration.**



Chum salmon has a life strategy which includes a short stay in freshwater as juveniles preferring to migrate and spend a considerable amount of time in estuarine waters and near coastal waters soon after hatching before migrating to the wider ocean. These fish are small, ranging from a couple of grams to ten grams which is substantially

## Upcoming Events

### Annacotty Weir Public Consultation

We recommend that all interested parties should attend this public consultation.

While this project is taking an inordinate amount of time to break ground, we advise that you should attend and ask relevant questions.

Our opinion is that from a fish production and ecological point of view that the removal of the weir is the preferred solution.

However, there may be other factors which may be in play which militate against this solution.

Please attend and voice your opinion.

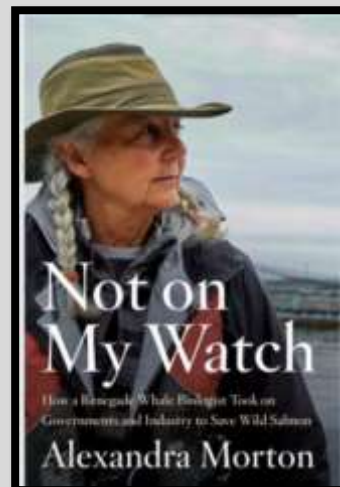
[Full Details Here](#)

smaller than Atlantic salmon and sea trout smolts which we encounter in Ireland. However, their reliance on near coast habitat is reflective of our sea trout.

Obviously, the removal of over 12 million farmed salmon from the Chum migration path and indeed from their feeding areas is highly significant and is probably one of the only verifiable ways that salmon farms can be excluded from the ongoing debate surrounding their impact on Atlantic salmon and sea trout here in Ireland. It would be interesting to exclude salmon farming in its entirety from an area in Ireland and see if there was a substantial effect on sea trout and salmon survival. This could be achieved if the political will was there but there seems to be no willingness to address the issue with the Marine Institute, seemingly hopelessly connected to outdated and poor science practice. This must change quickly if we are to have any chance of saving our sea trout and Atlantic salmon resource. We remind all our readers that it is not only the impact of sea lice but the worrying increasing trend of diseases from salmon farms that impact our wild salmonids. To quote Alexandra:

*"In 2024, salmon flooded into creeks at a survival rate no one thought possible. Here the DFO numbers are compiled so you can see the pattern. Rivers averaging six thousand fish saw 52,000 returns, survival jumped 10-20-fold from Alert Bay through Puget Sound. This did not happen coast wide, it occurred EXACTLY where salmon farms had been closed. Salmon demonstrated how incredibly strong they are when we don't infect them with fish farm diseases. Chief Svanvik and I tried to make this report as readable as possible. We put together the numbers so you can see the pattern for yourself, see what salmon is telling us. Please do right by these fish are share these DFO numbers widely. Thank you so much."*

We ask you to read the attached [report](#) here which seeks to explain the detail behind the increase in runs of Chum salmon and indeed other Pacific salmon species. We also strongly suggest you consider purchasing this book by Alexandra.



## Smolt Track



This is an EU funded project which examines survival of smolts at sea and their migration through freshwater.

It examines survival related to freshwater temperature, water height and the effect of predation.

## Greenland Salmon Tracking- An explanation of the important work conducted by NASCO and international scientists including Inland Fisheries Ireland

The recent report that a salmon tagged in September 2023 in Greenland which was recorded at the Erriff river in Mayo during June 2024 has received good coverage in the media in recent days. It is important to note that this fish was fitted with an acoustic tag in September 2023 but did not have a satellite tag fitted.

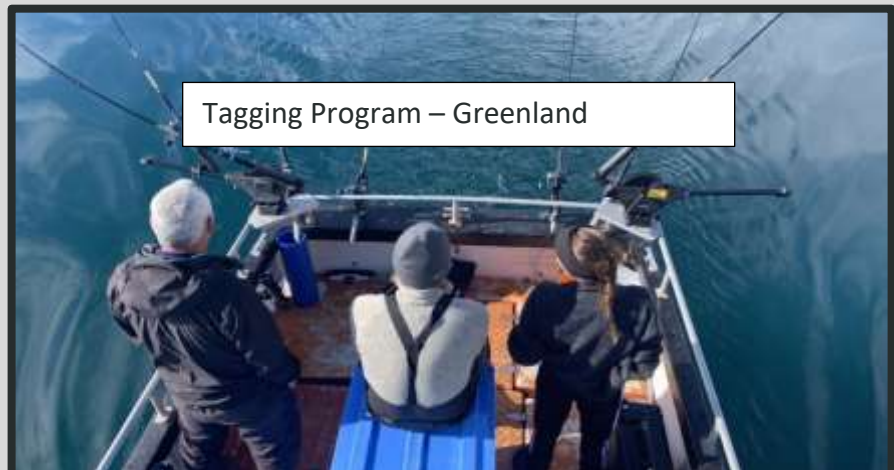
The fish was picked up in late June 2024 in Killary Harbour and entered the Erriff the following day. The fish was again located within the river in late December 24.

There are several separate projects to sample salmon in Greenland to ascertain genetic origin, feeding patterns and scale and tissue analysis and another to examine migration patterns with some scale analysis also taking place. The details of these projects are available to help you understand how these sampling and migration pattern studies are conducted.

The sampling for genetic origin and associated scale and tissue analysis is facilitated by examining salmon caught in the Greenland fishery with the cooperation of the commercial and recreational subsistence fishermen. This takes place in the autumn and reports are available at this link:



The acoustic and satellite tagging project is a more recent effort to track migration patterns and as such is in operation for several years. The details are available at this link:



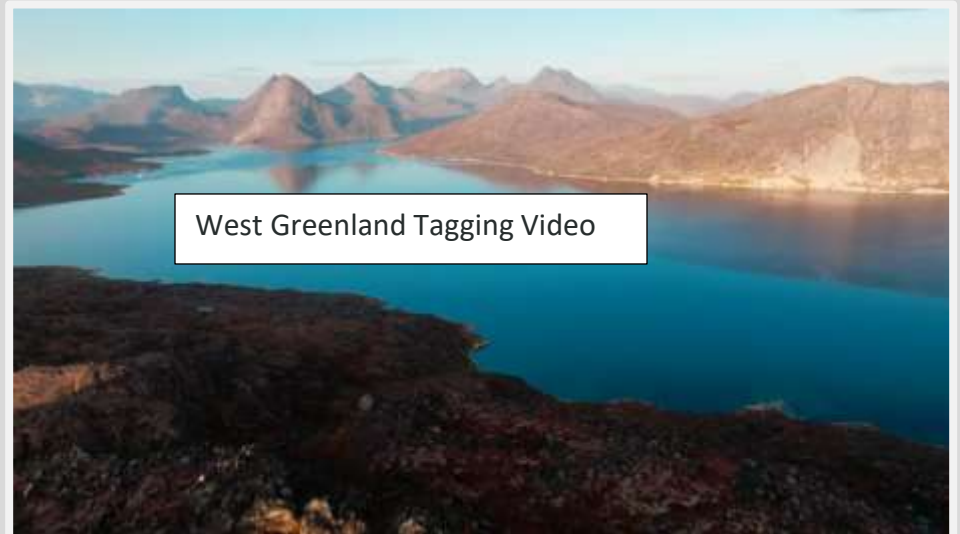
Salmon Watch Ireland  
hosted a conference  
on this subject in  
2019.

Details Here:



The presentation is  
interesting with highly  
variable results which  
appear to correlate  
with freshwater  
temperature and  
height.

The following video produced by Atlantic Salmon Federation demonstrates how this tagging is operated involving the use of trolling to catch the salmon. It is amazing that one of these tagged fish has travelled over two thousand kilometers back to the Erriff.



We hope you have found the content interesting. You might consider joining Salmon Watch Ireland:

**COMPLETE THE STANDING ORDER FORM AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD BELOW.**

**TO JOIN SWIRL FOR**

**30.00 EURO PER ANNUM AS AN INDIVIDUAL**

**100.00 EURO PER ANNUM AS A CLUB OR INTERESTED CONSERVATION BODY**

**BECOME A PATRON BY COMMITTING TO AN ANNUAL CONTRIBUTION OF**

**€1,000 FOR 3 YEARS.**

We have secured limited funding from the Community Foundation of Ireland through an anonymous donor for the next three years and this will allow us to broaden our policies and indeed help in a practical way to secure better conservation of Atlantic salmon.

This funding has allowed us to employ an individual on a part-time basis for the next six months to actively pursue our broad goals and aspirations for Atlantic salmon.

Salmon Watch Ireland

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