Salmon Watch Ireland

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Salmon and Sea Trout Counts Burishoole

Waterville Fishery: A look back at research in the period 1980 - 1986

It is calamitous that the fishery now has few sea trout and to repeat this research may not be possible today. Certainly, a situation which can be rescued but only with your help.

Authors of Study: Edward Fahy and Ruary Rudd

The Currane, Co. Kerry, Sea Trout Fishery (1980-1986)

Overview

This report presents a comprehensive analysis of the unique **Waterville sea trout stock** in **Lough Currane, Co. Kerry**, covering the years **1980 to 1986**. The research examines **growth patterns, genetic characteristics, environmental influences**, and **angling statistics**, providing valuable insights into **Ireland's largest** sea trout fishery.

Key Findings

- **Unique Genetic Traits**: The Waterville Seatrout population is distinct due to its **high diversity of age categories**, with evidence suggesting a close relationship with **ferox trout**, a long-lived brown trout strain.
- **Longevity & Growth**: These trout are **relatively long-lived**, contributing to **larger average sizes** compared to other Irish sea trout populations.
- **Recruitment & Productivity**: The main driver of population fluctuations is the **annual recruitment of post-smolt trout**. Growth in freshwater is influenced by the **length of the growing season**, whereas **marine growth conditions remain unclear**.
- **Stock Monitoring**: Over the **seven-year study period**, stock changes were **tracked using angler-reported catches**, providing insights into weight-to-length relationships, condition factors, and sex ratios.
- **Influence of Environmental Conditions**: Data suggests that **weather patterns**, particularly **the growing season length**, play a significant role in **juvenile trout survival and migration**.

Fishery Performance & Angling Data

- **Waterville's sea trout are the largest in Ireland** but catch numbers per angler tend to be lower.
- The **average sea trout weight** in Currane was **consistently higher** than in other Irish fisheries.
- **Spring runs of older fish** extend the angling season, making Currane an attractive but challenging fishery.

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- Comparisons with **Burrishoole (Co. Mayo)** suggest **similar recruitment trends**, supporting the role of environmental factors in trout production.

Conclusion & Implications

The study highlights the **exceptional nature of the Waterville sea trout fishery**, emphasizing the importance of **long-term monitoring and conservation**. Given its **genetic uniqueness and vulnerability to introgression**, careful management is necessary to **preserve this rare and valuable stock**.

This research provides a **valuable reference** for fisheries management, angling communities, and conservation efforts aimed at sustaining **Ireland's premier sea trout fishery**.

Read the Full Report Here: Waterville Sea Trout

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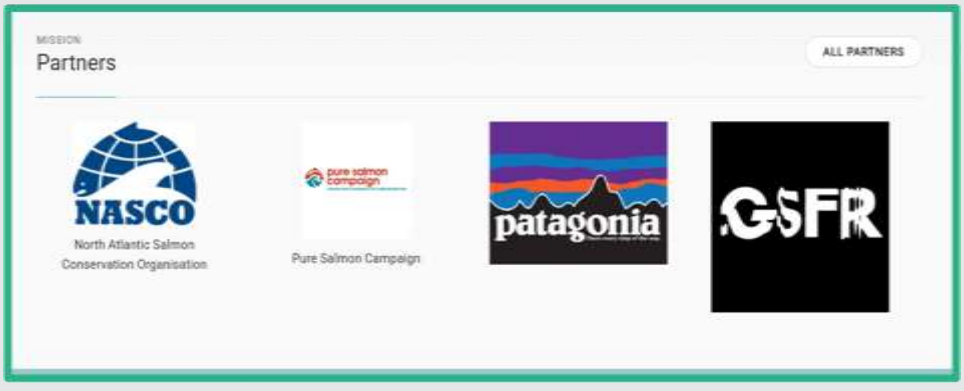

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