

# **Straffan Weir**

02 April 2025

## **Salmon Watch Ireland Policy on Barriers**



## **Legislation Fisheries Act**

**Barriers**

**Fish Passes**

**Hydro Power**



**Update 02 April 2025**

## **Salmon Watch Ireland**

The Liffey Salmon Project recently informed Salmon Watch Ireland that a long disused hydro-electric facility located at Straffan Weir in County Kildare has had major works carried out including the installation of a new turbine and other associated works to facilitate the commissioning of the plant to provide power to the adjacent K Club.

We were informed that no planning application or application to be exempt from planning was lodged by the K Club with Kildare County Council.



**Inland Fisheries Ireland, Liffey Salmon Project and Salmon Watch Ireland have since made a complaint to Kildare County Council citing that this development was unauthorised and that Kildare County Council should issue a cease-and-desist order to prevent further works on the scheme.**

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## Recent Updates



Recently a decision from Kildare County Council indicated that the complaint was not an enforcement issue and closed the file on the complaint. They have passed the complaint to their forward Planning/Ecology section for consideration and review.

A report in the past number of days appears to indicate that works on the tailrace have taken place with a deepening of the channel. This has taken place outside the permitted period for instream works and Salmon Watch have reported this to Inland Fisheries Ireland, and we strongly suggest that this report be investigated, and appropriate legal measures should be invoked.

There are significant issues for salmonids and other fish species regarding the operation of this facility with no fence on the tailrace to stop salmon or other species entering from the main channel and the dividing wall appears to be inadequate to prevent fish from entering the tailrace also.



These requirements are mandatory in legislation. Inland Fisheries Ireland has indicated that the intake screens upstream are adequate to prevent access to the turbine. Inland Fisheries Ireland have informed us that the turbine is not operating at present. The works on the turbine and instream works were not sanctioned by Inland Fisheries Ireland.

Another issue to be examined must be the amount of water diverted to power the facility. It is feared that in low water conditions there may be instances where fish may be unable to pass the weir due to the operation of the facility if too much water is diverted through the turbine.

It is also highly probable that smolts may be delayed on their migration due to lack of water crossing the crest of the weir while this facility is in operation.

These delays in migration both upstream and downstream are strongly related to increased predation and mortality.

We are increasingly aware that long-disused hydro and other schemes are certainly being viewed as a source of power generation which is in direct conflict with our policy regarding barriers and certainly conflicts with the Water Framework Directive and the Restoration of Nature Legislation.

The following image gives a clear overview of the project house and tailrace. This image is representative of no water being diverted through the turbine and suggests that a diversion of a significant amount of water through the turbine will significantly impact water levels on the weir and fish pass.



It is extremely disappointing that the developers of this project appear not to have thus far consulted with relevant fisheries authorities and stakeholders to arrive at a solution which protects the valuable and ecologically important Atlantic salmon population of the River Liffey. There is certainly a window of opportunity to reflect on their actions and arrive at a solution which effectively provides protection for salmonids and other fish species. However, if adequate protection is not afforded to salmonids or other species, the hydro project should not be commissioned.

We await the review by Kildare County Council and suggest strongly that all aspects of the development must be reviewed and if the project is to become operational, fish migration must be prioritised.

