

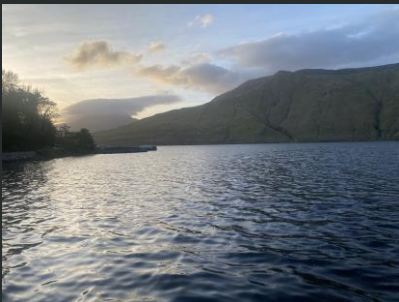
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**The Salmon Watch  
Ireland  
Document Library**

**This is available to all and will in time be a significant resource for all those interested in becoming informed about issues which may impact the conservation of Atlantic salmon and sea trout.**

**It is increasingly important that in an age of increasing misinformation that such a resource exists which is based on legal and scientific peer reviewed content.**



**Document Library**

## **SALMON WATCH IRELAND NEWSLETTER**

- **NEW GROUNDBREAKING RESEARCH ON SEA LICE**
- **THE CASE FOR DISCONTINUING COMMERCIAL SALMON FISHING ON THE MUNSTER BLACKWATER**
- **BOOK REVIEW – PATSY PERIL “SWIMMING UPSTREAM”**

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### **Sea Lice from Fish Farms Are Hurting Wild Atlantic Salmon— New Study Warns**

A landmark study led by Dr. Patrick Gargan formerly of Inland Fisheries Ireland and colleagues has delivered the clearest evidence yet that sea lice from salmon aquaculture are harming wild Atlantic salmon.

Published in the *Journal of Animal Ecology*, the research analyses 18 years of data and finds that untreated young salmon migrating near fish farms suffer 18% lower return rates as adults compared to those protected from lice.

#### **What's the Issue?**

Sea lice, tiny parasitic crustaceans, are a natural part of marine ecosystems. But in salmon farming, open-net pens in coastal waters create ideal conditions for lice to multiply. When wild salmon smolts (juvenile fish) pass near these farms during their critical early migration, they can become infested—sometimes fatally.

#### **The Study**

Using 43 paired release trials from 2001 to 2019 across Ireland's west coast, researchers compared hatchery-raised salmon treated with anti-lice medication against untreated controls. The study represents the most comprehensive dataset of its kind in Ireland.

#### **Key findings include:**

- Treated salmon had a 22% higher survival rate on average.
- Lice pressure was a major driver: survival dropped sharply with increasing lice densities.
- Even treated fish suffered reduced returns under high lice pressure, indicating partial resistance to treatment.
- The effects of lice were especially severe when smolts were released earlier in the season—timing matters.

**This coming week sees the annual conference of the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation. This year's conference takes place in Cardiff, Wales from 02 June to 06 June.**

**You can view all the conference documentation at the following link.**



**Salmon Watch Ireland will be attending this year's conference and looks forward to having the opportunity to network with like minded NGOs and to influence government parties to actively conserve Atlantic salmon.**

### **Why It Matters**

Atlantic salmon populations are already in steep decline due to climate change, overfishing, and habitat degradation. Gargan's study underscores that fish farms are adding a preventable pressure to this endangered species.

The implications are broad:

- Rivers with salmon farming nearby may see significantly lower salmon returns.
- Protected rivers under the EU Habitats Directive are at risk of missing conservation targets due to farm-related lice impacts.
- The findings challenge the fish farming industry's current sea lice management strategies, calling into question their effectiveness.

### **Policy and Conservation Takeaways**

The study supports stricter regulation and better lice control in salmon aquaculture. It also strengthens the case for spatial planning to move farms away from sensitive salmon habitats preferably to an on-land relocation. According to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation, 100% of farms should prevent lice-related mortality of wild salmon. This research shows Ireland is failing Atlantic salmon.

This study essentially demonstrates that wild salmon are at significant risk during smolt migration. The study also calls into considerable doubt the ongoing attachment by regulatory bodies to research carried out by the Marine Institute which is now firmly at odds with this research.

Salmon Watch Ireland will be using this research in future to legally challenge regulatory bodies on licensing of salmon farms.

This is a very significant piece of work, and the authors Patrick Gargan, Michael Millane, Robert Lennox, and Knut Wiik Vollset, should be congratulated by everyone interested in salmon conservation.

More information on this paper can be found at:

<https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/1365-2656.70051>

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## **The Case for Discontinuing Commercial Salmon Fishing on the Munster Blackwater**

Salmon Watch Ireland has made a case to have the commercial salmon fishery closed on the Munster Blackwater due to two contributing rivers entering the tidal section upstream of this commercial fishery, failing to reach their conservation limit. These designated salmon rivers which are protected under the Habitats Directive, and which have suffered a consistent and alarming decline in juvenile salmon density should not be subject to any exploitation and it is our view that the evidence of continuing decline is stark and cannot be allowed to continue.

This is a similar situation that pertained in Castlemaine Harbour and which was subject to a High Court Judicial Review. This fishery was closed by order of the Department to reflect best scientific practice and to comply with EU and Irish laws.

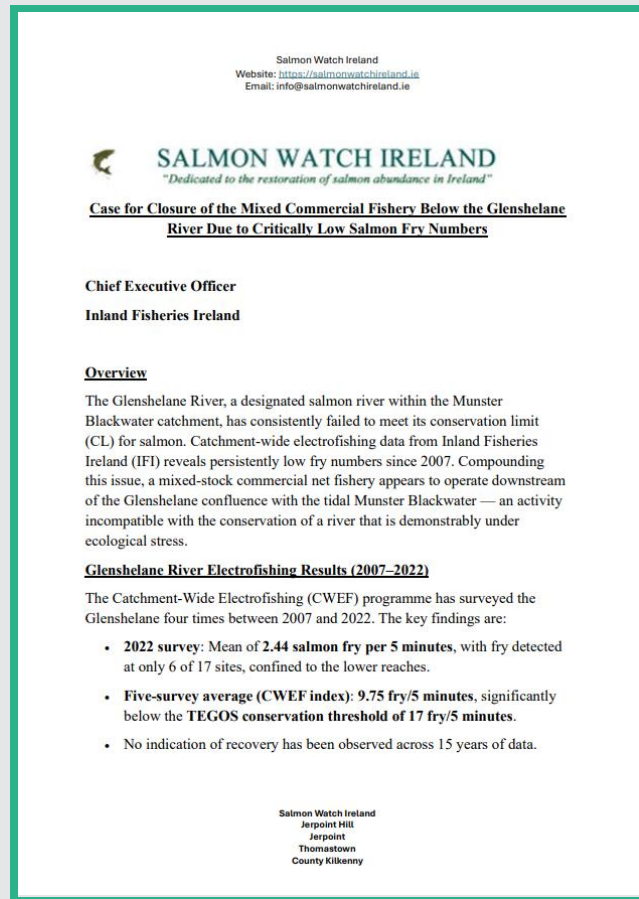
## A Startling Expose of Organic Salmon Farming in Ireland

Don Staniford was in Ireland in recent weeks and discovered some unsettling and unsavory practices associated with the so-called Irish Organic Salmon Company (MOWI)

The following video footage and documentation demonstrates that MOWI appears to have little regard for biosecurity, health and generally operate without proper supervision by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

We would certainly suggest that all exploitation is examined on the river to manage a seemingly radical decline and certainly MSW salmon should be protected going forward.

Read the full text here:

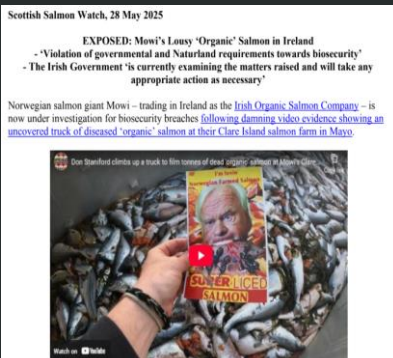


## Swimming Upstream: One Man's Fight to Save the Atlantic Wild Salmon by Patsy Peril and Deirdre Nuttall

"Swimming Upstream" by Patsy Peril is a fantastic memoir that blends personal history with environmental activism. This is an insight into traditional salmon fishing on the Shannon and how the deep ties still resonate today with the many communities which grew up in the midst of a changing River Shannon.

He highlights the environmental damage caused by industrialization—especially the 1929 Ardnacrusha hydroelectric station—and the decline of Atlantic wild salmon due to pollution, overfishing, and fish farms. This problem is all the more apparent in that no real attempt has been made to improve the salmon's torturous journey through the lower Shannon which effectively remains blocked to this day.

Co-written with folklorist Deirdre Nuttall, the memoir also preserves the cultural heritage of a vanishing way of life.





With the rapidly accelerating water temperature increase in west coast locations, many salmon will die on these farms, and this is not an isolated occurrence.

Next Issue will address the NASCO Conference.

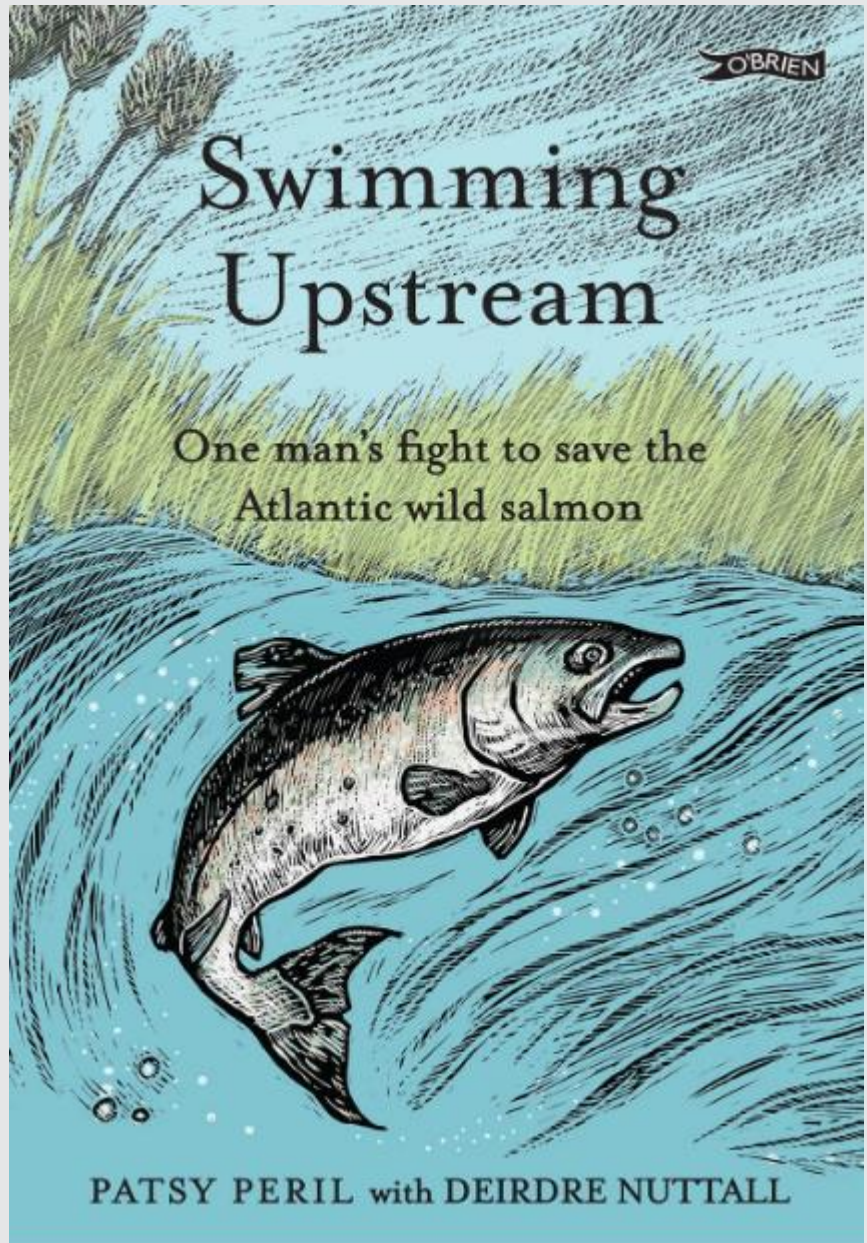
We would also like to examine the ALAB decision this week to further delay the determination of an appeal against the decision of DAFM To close the Deenish farm in 2019.

This is now six years at appeal which is a poor reflection on this appeals board.

More next Issue.

In essence, it's a passionate plea for environmental stewardship and cultural preservation. We readily suggest that our readers should read this book to gain an insight into how salmon populations on the Shannon have effectively been destroyed by inaction. This book gives us an outlook on how the salmon population decline has occurred from the perspective of a traditional fisherman.

For details to purchase this book, please click on photo below.



Please Visit our website:

<https://salmonwatchireland.ie>