

Newsletter Number 23
31 October 2025

Quick 2024 snapshot
(for context)

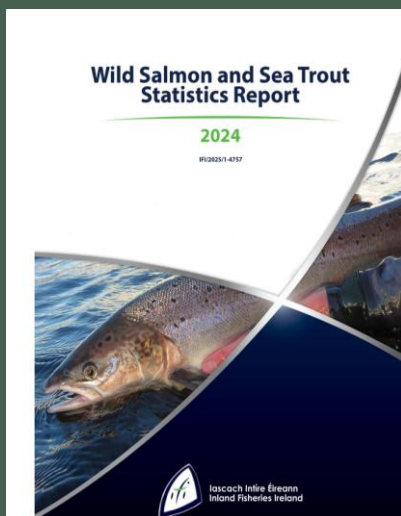
Total salmon
(all methods, incl. C&R):
20,822

Angling: 16,457 (C&R
9,605 | harvest 6,852)

Commercial: 4,365
(90% of TAC)

C&R rate (salmon)
58% nationwide

Full Report:



Wild Salmon & Sea Trout — Long-Term Trends (2001–2024)
Source: Inland Fisheries Ireland — Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Statistics
Report 2024.

Salmon harvest has collapsed since 2001 partially related to stronger conservation policies, but the substantial collapse relates to a sharp decline of salmon coming back to our rivers. The total salmon harvest (all engines, incl. rod harvest) fell from 259,475 fish in 2001 to 11,217 in 2024. That's a 96% drop over the full period and 60% down since Ireland moved to single-stock river management (ended mixed-stock sea fisheries in 2007).

Underlying stock pressure: Adult Atlantic salmon returns have fallen from 2 million in the 1970s to <150,000 today—a stark backdrop to the catch trend. Drivers include climate change, water quality decline, habitat loss and reduced biodiversity. We would also suggest strongly that salmon farming is a substantial contributor to decline in areas where farms exist.

Management Shift in 2007

Since 2007, harvest has been allowed only on rivers with a surplus above their Conservation Limit (CL); catch-and-release (C&R) only on rivers meeting $\geq 50\%$ of CL; others closed. This structural change explains the step-change in harvest after 2006.

Share of catch: In 2024, anglers accounted for 79% of total salmon caught (incl. C&R) vs 21% commercial—the modern norm under river-by-river management.

The commercial TAC in 2024 was 4,883, with 4,395 fish harvested (90% of TAC) high utilisation compared with many recent years. Draft nets took 88% of commercial salmon, snap nets 12%.

In 2024, 66% of commercial salmon went to licensed dealers, 14% for domestic consumption, 12% private sale: the rest unknown.

C&R keeps rising: National salmon C&R rate climbed to 58% in 2024 (56% in 2023, 35–45% a decade ago depending on year).

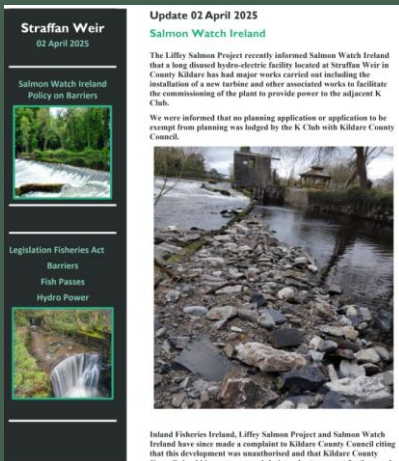
Of 16,025 licence holders in 2024, 16.7% (2,681) caught at least one salmon; 12.6% (2,021) harvested salmon; 8.3% (1,329) released salmon. Most harvesters (78%) kept ≤ 3 fish.



Please do not forget the Waterville Fishery in its hour of need.



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Participation & compliance: down from earlier highs

Licence sales trend: From 32,814 (2001) to 16,025 (2024)—nearly halved over two decades; 2024 also down 4.3% vs 2023.

Logbook returns falling: After peaking around the early 2010s (~70–75%), the national return rate slipped to 48.7% in 2024 (49.5% in 2023). This matters because non-returns require “raising” factors to estimate true catch.

Seasonality & stock makeup: spring fish vs grilse

Spring (2SW/MSW) salmon: 2024 delivered 2,166 spring salmon (13% of angling catch), -17.7% vs 2023—well below many pre-2020 levels. The Moy (432), Laune (273) and Blackwater (213) led spring catches.

Grilse (1SW): 14,291 grilse caught by anglers in 2024 (incl. C&R), essentially flat vs 2023 (-0.61%), but far below peaks seen in 2010–2012.

Geography: increasingly concentrated

Five rivers now dominate: In 2024, the Moy (20%), Blackwater/Lismore (13.3%), Laune (11.3%), Lower Lee (5.7%) and Corrib (5.0%) accounted for 55% of all salmon caught (angling + commercial, incl. C&R).

Moy alone produced 4,152 salmon by rod and line in 2024; Blackwater 2,058; Corrib 1,053; Suir 923—together 50% of the angling total.

The 2007 shift to river-by-river CL management has prioritised sustainability, but stock recovery remains fragile, with total harvests far below early-2000s levels.

Anglers are central to stewardship: Rising C&R and concentrated effort on a subset of rivers point to where habitat restoration, barrier removal and water quality work could deliver the biggest gains.

Data quality matters more than ever: Falling logbook return rates increase uncertainty; rebuilding compliance will sharpen management decisions.

Salmon Watch Ireland appeals to all anglers to return their logbooks and to demonstrate that they remain focused on conservation.

DATA IS NOT COMPLETE WITHOUT THIS.