

ECONOMIC CONTRIBUTION OF VISITING SALMON ANGLERS TO THE MOY AND CORRIB FISHERIES

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Economic contribution of visiting Salmon anglers to the Moy and Corrib fisheries¹

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OVERVIEW

This research paper considers salmon anglers visiting two of the top Atlantic salmon fisheries in the country, the Corrib in Co. Galway and the river Moy, at Ballina, Co. Mayo. Salmon fishing at these premier locations is highly valued with total willingness to pay estimated in excess of €800/day, however, the research also finds that tourist anglers are very sensitive to price. Expenditure by anglers visiting these fisheries is approximately €300/day excluding travel costs, which benefits local economies. The research also finds that spending by international anglers is not any higher than domestic tourist anglers, indicating that international anglers are not necessarily more lucrative to the local economy. An unexpected finding is that even when allowing for differences in travel costs there is reluctance among some domestic tourist anglers, e.g. anglers living in Dublin, to travel to these two fisheries.

BACKGROUND

The research was funded and undertaken in collaboration with Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI). The analysis focuses on the Corrib and Moy fisheries because they are among the premier salmon fisheries in Ireland and of the 5,000 or so overseas anglers who purchase salmon licenses more than half buy licenses for either the Moy or Corrib river basins. Data for the analysis was collected on-site at IFI's fisheries on the Corrib and Moy, with anglers completing short surveys as they signed-in for their fishing session. Using statistical methods we estimate how much factors such as distance, costs, and angler attributes affect the level of fishing demand.

¹ This Bulletin summarises the findings from: Grilli, G., Landgraf, G., Curtis, J., Hynes, S., "A travel cost evaluation of the benefits of two destination salmon rivers in Ireland", *Journal of Outdoor Recreation and Tourism*, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jort.2018.02.004>

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POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Previous research on recreational fishing in Ireland indicated that anglers are not particularly price sensitive but the research findings here suggest the opposite. Tourist salmon anglers at these two premier destination fisheries are very responsive to the costs they face. Whether this result is more generally applicable to tourists visiting other salmon angling sites requires further research but it suggests that in the face of escalating costs tourist anglers are likely to switch to other locations, including those overseas.

Excluding travel costs, spending by domestic tourist salmon anglers is equivalent to that of their international counterparts. We find no evidence to support the perception that visiting international anglers are financially more lucrative to the local areas than domestic anglers. Spending by international anglers is a net benefit to the economy whereas domestic angler expenditure entails a regional allocation of spending to hinterland of the fisheries. Accordingly, marketing campaigns for the fisheries should target both domestic as well as international anglers.

There appears to be reluctance among domestic tourist anglers to travel to these two fisheries. Further research to better understand the underlying reasons for the reluctance to travel could help inform measures to widen the potential market for the fisheries.

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