



**Iascach Intíre Éireann  
Inland Fisheries Ireland**

**Inland Fisheries Ireland  
Stock Management Plan  
2022**



Iascach Infire Éireann  
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### **Introduction:**

In accordance with Inland Fisheries Ireland's current policies on both pike and wild brown trout, stock management operations are planned for six lake catchments and one sub-catchment in the WRBD and ShRBD as follows: Loughs Corrib, Mask, Carra, Conn, Cullin, Arrow and Sheelin all of which are designated managed wild brown trout fisheries. Also included in this management plan is the Owenriff system near Oughterard where pike are a recent introduction.

Gill netting and electrofishing (EF) operations are planned for seven of the eight systems named above with electrofishing only planned for L. Sheelin. Full details of the estimated start and finish times are tabulated in this plan and include effort (expressed in person hours). Electrofishing operations will also be carried out on Loughs Corrib, Mask, Carra, Owenriff system, Conn and Cullin and some of their principal tributary rivers as well as Lough Sheelin and Arrow.

The operations will be carried out in accordance with IFI's Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for both electrofishing and gill netting. All staff handling pike will do so in accordance with IFI's SOPs and all have received fish handling and welfare training. Pike carcasses will be temporarily retained for research purposes and remains will, thereafter be appropriately disposed of by an approved rendering company. It should be noted that the delivery of this plan is dependent on suitable weather conditions, availability of personnel and all equipment remaining fully operational.

### **Gill Netting Operations**

Netting will be concentrated into specific periods on each lake as detailed in table 1 (and 3 for owenriff). These operations will depend on weather and other factors which can impact on timing and location. It is unlikely that the full periods outlined in the tables will be fished on each lake. In general, gill nets will be set along margins and lake-shores to intercept pike moving in and out of known spawning areas. All appropriately sized pike will be handled carefully and quickly euthanised. Nets will be serviced daily and will not be set if there are concerns in relation to weather conditions the following day.



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### **Gill Netting Periods**

Gill netting will commence on Monday 7 February on Lough Corrib/Mask and Lough Conn/Cullin. It will commence on Lough Carra on 28 February and Arrow on 21 February. It is estimated that 420 Man Days will be required for Gill netting on the Corrib Catchment (Carra, Mask, Corrib), 186 days for Conn/Cullin, 96 Days for Arrow, and 60 days for the Owenriff lakes. The location of nets will be determined locally, based on weather forecast for the following weeks and staff numbers available. Some gill netting operations may be stopped for a period on Corrib and Mask to facilitate Electro Fishing when suitable conditions prevail if this is deemed more productive.

Netting will be concentrated into specific areas of all lakes during different periods of the pike management season. Known spawning areas are targeted during spawning activity while other operations will take advantage of pike congregations, which occur in accordance with specific feeding behaviour associated with spring and autumn salmonid migrations. Gill netting dates are outlined in the table below.

**Table 1: Details of Gill Netting Operations Planned for 2022 in the WRBD**

<b>Lake</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Person days</b>
<b>Corrib</b>	Feb – April, Oct - Nov	220
<b>Mask</b>	Feb – March, Oct - Nov	140
<b>Carra</b>	March – April, Oct - Nov	60
<b>Conn/Cullin</b>	Feb - April Oct – Dec	186
<b>Arrow</b>	Feb - April	96
<b>Sheelin</b>	N/A	
<b>Owenriff</b>	See Table 3	

### **Electrofishing Operations**

The plan for electro fishing for the Corrib, Conn/Cullin catchments and Lough Arrow is to operate when suitable conditions present over the whole year with a total of 280 man-days between the 5 lakes which include some of the larger tributaries and inflow areas. On L. Sheelin, Electrofishing operations will take place over 100 man days on suitable occasions between 15 March and 30 October.

Electrofishing can be carried out year-round on lakes subject to suitable weather and water conditions. As such, the period identified for EF operations is, generally, much longer. In addition to targeting the nursery margins, EF will also be used to control pike numbers in the lower reaches of a number of rivers including the Clare, Owenriff, Cornamona, Maam, Robe, Aille, Annies, Deel, Manulla and Castlebar systems. There is ample observational evidence of severe predation of



salmon smolts and trout near and in the mouths of salmonid rivers and streams especially when they are migrating in March, April and October. EF operations on some river mouths will therefore be scheduled for spring and autumn to mitigate against excessive predation of migrating salmonids.

**Table 2: Details of Electrofishing Operations on Designated Wild Brown trout waters Planned for 2022**

Lake	Period	Man days
Corrib Catchment (Corrib, Mask, Carra)	Jan - Dec	180
L Conn & Cullin including inflowing rivers	Jan - Dec	100
Arrow	Jan - Dec	36
Sheelin	Mar - Oct	100
Owenriff	See Table 3	

The use of submerged light traps, as trialed on Lough Conn in 2021 may also be considered during 2022, if resources and logistics allow. Appropriate Assessment Screening Reports for all stock management plans and methodologies are in place.

### Owenriff

The removal of pike from the Owenriff system will be on-going throughout the year with various methods being used including electro fishing, gill nets, fyke nets and perch/pike traps. Below is an estimate of effort to be employed.

**Table 3 : Details Management operations (man days) on the Owenriff system - 2022**

		Man Days	
		Gill Nets, Fyke Nets & Perch traps	Electro Fishing & Other Methods
Q1	Jan - March	20	
Q2	April - June	20	20
Q3	July - Sept	20	20
Q4	Oct - Dec		10
<b>Total</b>		<b>60</b>	<b>50</b>