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IRISH SALMON DATA

by  
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Catch statistics: Some information is submitted in Tables 1 - 4 on the fluctuations in catches in Irish Rivers from 1960 onwards. All fish captured up to the end of May are classed as salmon (2 sea winters) and thereafter grilse (1+ winters). In 1967 there is a marked reduction in the numbers of fish taken in the catches before May 31. This reduction is manifested in the export figures, in the Billingsgate market returns and also in the number of fish presented for sale in the Dublin wholesale fish market. In all these locations an increase in the number of summer fish (mainly grilse) is in evidence. The catch figures for grilse are almost on a par with the very good catches which occurred in 1962.

The reduction in spring fish is due to (a) a poor run of spring fish and (b) to a lesser extent to UDN disease which affected a number of spring fish rivers in 1967. The occurrence of the disease reduced the catch per unit effort by rod anglers. In many of our rivers rod caught fish account for a high proportion of the salmon from January, February and March. In 1967 there was some reluctance due to UDN disease amongst rod anglers on some rivers to go fishing.

Catch statistics are provided for a number of different river systems (Tables 6 - 11). The figures supplied are for as many years as they are available. In the case of the River Bandon (Table 9) and the Sligo river (Table 11) reliable figures are only available from 1961 onwards. The fixed draft net in Sligo is of particular interest as all the fish therein are 2 sea winter salmon since fishing ceases at the end of April each year. As there is little variation in the fishing effort in the catch statistics supplied the figures can be regarded as constant except alone in what we term open sea drift nets which are fished from 0 60 6 nautical miles off the north west coast. Here a catch net/effort is given (Table 5). Monthly figures for rod catches are available only for two rivers. In the River Shannon (Table 10) the estimated runs of fish when the commercial engines have taken their toll is given but the figures supplied are a fairly true indication of the fluctuations of the total runs of fish into the river.

Age composition: The composition of the stocks from scale reading data expressed in sea winters for the River Shannon and River Moy are given in Table 12 and 13. Both rivers show a reduction in 2 and 2+ sea winter fish in 1967. This only verifies what is obvious in the catch statistics presented in Tables 1 - 11.

Smolt ages: The age composition of the smolts as obtained from the scales of adult salmon is given for three different river systems for 1967 (Table 14), and these figures can be taken as representative of most Irish rivers. The 2 year old smolts are the dominant age group representing between 70% and 90% of the total for all smolts. In most rivers the 1 year old smolts are next in importance. There are two notable exceptions where 3 year old smolts are dominant over 1 year olds - River Inny and River Owenea.

Mean length and weight: The mean length and weight of a sample of fish of known age (expressed in sea winters) from 3 river system is given in Table 15.

Tagging data 1967:

Smolt Tagging - 10,000 hatchery reared smolts were tagged in January, 1967. There were no recaptures reported to date.

Tagging of adult fish - A total of 3,102 kelts were tagged in the 1967 season and 64 were recaptured as clean fish in home waters. A total of 47 clean salmon were tagged off the west coast of Ireland in 1967 - only three recaptures were made, all within a short distance of the tagging station. One Greenland tagged salmon (tagged, Nov. 1967) was recaptured in the River Slaney, south east coast of Ireland in March, 1968.

Catch Statistics

Table 1. Export in Cwts of Salmon

Year	Total	January/May No. %	June onwards No. %
1960	10,920	3,280 30.0	7,640 70.0
1961	9,054	2,218 24.5	6,841 75.5
1962	18,834	2,571 13.6	16,263 86.4
1963	23,417	5,405 23.1	18,012 76.9
1964	22,642	5,050 22.3	17,592 77.7
1965	19,420	4,687 24.1	14,733 75.9
1966	17,159	4,285 24.9	12,874 75.1
1967	20,228	2,594 12.8	17,634 87.2

Table 2. Division of arrivals of Salmon at Billingsgate Market: London.

Year	Total	January/May No. %	June onwards No. %
1960	7,851	2,773 34.0	5,078 66.0
1961	8,116	1,525 18.8	6,591 81.2
1962	11,933	1,483 12.4	10,450 87.6
1963	14,277	2,917 20.4	11,360 79.6
1964	14,519	3,233 22.3	11,286 77.7
1965	19,038	2,589 28.6	6,449 71.4
1966	11,212	2,502 22.3	8,710 77.7
1967	10,422	1,663 15.8	8,759 84.2

Table 3. Numbers of Salmon sold in the Dublin Wholesale Fish Market

Year	Total	Jan/May	Percentage	June onwards No.	Percentage
1960	45,421	9,192	20.2	36,229	79.8
1961	42,316	7,926	18.7	34,390	81.3
1962	131,215	12,514	9.5	118,701	90.5
1963	104,475	15,577	14.9	88,898	85.1
1964	111,866	14,068	12.6	97,798	87.4
1965	101,728	13,191	13.0	88,537	87.0
1966	98,950	13,487	13.6	85,463	86.4
1967	95,168	7,345	7.7	87,823	92.3

Table 4. Catch returns from the nearest 1,000 lb. for commercial engines together with number of licences issued, and average catch per licence.

Year	Catch in 1,000 lbs.	No. of licences issued	X Mean catch per commercial licence
1960	1,134	1,195	950
1961	1,153	1,121	1,030
1962	2,606	1,180	2,210
1963	2,495	1,289	1,940
1964	2,623	1,523	1,720
1965	2,453	1,273	1,700
1966	2,406	1,842	1,250
1967			X to nearest 10 lbs

Table 5. Captures of salmon at sea  
Details of Landings from open sea drift nets (May to August)

Year	No. of fish landed	Mean catch per engine
1960	28,620	325
1961	22,588	224
1962	58,547	563
1963	60,197	456
1964	68,423	430
1965	98,397	520
1966	94,555	516
1967	129,885	733

Table 6. Monthly catches of salmon in the River Blackwater by all methods (rods, nets and weirs).

Year	February	March	April	May	June	July	Total
1953	1818	1253	1841	2369	5265	10050	22596
1954	4532	6279	6253	3388	5004	6239	31695
1955	2118	2667	3534	4113	2993		15425
1956	1582	1828	1874	2546	2955	5282	16067
1957	2258	1565	1826	2048	4242	6785	18724
1958	1280	1389	2168	2123	3812	10547	21319
1959	2038	3150	2672	2139	3339	9958	23289
1960	1645	1445	1779	2039	3403	5429	15740
1961	753	1261	896	1191	3321	5764	13186
1962	904	1028	929	1915	10478	21659	36913
1963	1913	3512	3365	4040	7912	20008	40750
1964	2823	1835	2346	4619	8136	20927	40686
1965	1431	3248	2714	3955	8426	15761	35535
1966	1567	2808	1857	3462	6608	13781	30083
1967	631	1002	1112	2685	8274	16796	30500
Average monthly catch	1819	2285	2344	2842	5611	11266	

Table 7. Monthly catches of salmon in the estuary of the River Moy by fixed draft net catch/month/net.

Year	February	March	April	May	June	July	August
1948	193	509	1771	2138	13830	8958	1898
1949	164	536	1820	2072	5252	13215	229
1950	162	217	995	1216	6085	6555	538
1951	29	299	567	1155	7971	11755	831
1952	234	270	822	1348	8640	5830	751
1953	94	194	471	1731	10116	13419	815
1954	113	389	1014	1361	3604	9449	150
1955	40	142	451	1397	6641	7533	1356
1956	41	272	705	1173	10588	14593	1579
1957	43	236	451	2284	19113	17047	469
1958	121	241	624	1700	6942	17372	681
1959	118	496	921	1863	4523	17422	2251
1960	83	285	664	1110	10595	10098	684
1961	106	351	394	740	12529	14995	690
1962	-	391	528	1505	13530	19723	*
1963	-	580	820	1120	7838	20249	*
1964	158	340	894	1447	13382	21939	*
1965	192	386	771	1299	8847	13528	351
1966	140	297	1033	1860	2611	10771	1136
1967	84	241	361	1150	8252	11409	635
Average monthly catch	106	334	804	1483	9044	13293	885

\* not available

Table 8. Stake weir catch - River Shannon  
Annual Monthly catch, 1960 - 1967.

Year	February	March	April	May	June	July	Total
1960	97	112	183	320	691	377	1780
1961	93	298	427	363	1390	762	3333
1962	44	149	123	382	2052	2681	5431
1963	66	198	389	237	2159	1467	4516
1964	56	152	346	293	903	1062	2812
1965	46	160	255	607	2253	908	4229
1966	25	270	177	544	1028	823	2867
1967	22	94	163	470	2942	1482	5173
Average for 1960 - 1967	56	179	258	402	1677	1195	

Table 9. River Bandon - 1961 - 1967  
Monthly catch figures - rods and nets.

	1961		1962		1963		1964		1965		1966		1967		Monthly average 1960 - 1967
	rods	nets	rods	nets	rods	nets	rods	nets	rods	nets	rods	nets	rods	nets	
February	58	-	21	-	71	-	283	-	38	-	57	-	51	-	83
March	172	210	121	138	632	803	670	381	263	538	151	463	161	146	693
April	197	238	143	221	483	854	441	667	392	601	271	517	41	394	780
May	137	219	131	296	305	663	401	672	271	937	104	841	139	920	862
June	14	492	37	1161	106	1067	107	1410	292	1236	110	1141	70	1151	1199
July	14	655	51	3071	94	2873	92	3211	91	1790	71	?	69	3182	3711
August	28	271	46	793	61	903	31	1242	63	451	27	?	87	610	715
September			92	-	71	-	41	-	47		73	-	71	-	
Total	620	2095	642	5680	642	7163	2066	7485	1457	5553	864		689	6403	

Table 10. Estimated runs of fish in the Shannon based on the returns to Themond Weir.

Year	Jan/Feb	March	April	May	June	To July 19	Total
1941	112	71	1090	3994	15259	1417	22003
1942	153	735	1464	1987	12834	1137	18325
1943	111	1047	1456	1982	10430	4410	18446
1944	305	608	1064	1236	7343	1294	11940
1945	13	365	503	775	3883	1143	6610
1946	60	484	721	756	6957	1760	10738
1947	63	443	575	491	3831	2993	8386
1948	217	783	1061	967	5716	1248	9881
1949	581	792	1460	1260	7092	2097	13282
1950	245	763	1760	485	7724	3457	14934
1951	153	800	1740	1768	6242	4031	14134
1952	223	958	1287	760	6004	1310	10542
1953	483	526	659	1661	9027	5185	17431
1954	139	730	1412	1272	5253	5187	13993
1955	101	386	1419	1343	2934	2797	8980
1956	194	863	1037	1437	4989	4476	12999
1957	62	552	787	1352	6600	3774	12969
1958	70	572	924	785	4943	4687	11749
1959	361	667	1034	1011	3264	5170	11229
1960	81	283	356	653	3424	3169	7610
1961	54	252	247	333	2850	1358	5094
1962	206	233	427	1186	7301	9875	18328
1963	80	427	849	805	8701	6100	16962
1964	163	390	772	1306	4339	5872	11842
1965	77	544	964	984	7414	8807	18790
1966	26	136	81	532	3298	5821	9894
1967	92	45	381	735	9392	6209	16854
Average Monthly catch 1941/1967	164	535	946	1180	6557	3881	



Table 11. Fixed draft net - Sligo  
Catch/net/month

	January	February	March	April	Total
1961	76	45	68	6	195
1962	69	44	61	-	184
1963	81	111	240	76	508
1964	106	74	54	29	263
1965	163	110	146	60	479
1966	198	70	57	25	350
1967	144	31	28	20	223
Average 1966-1967	120	69	93	36	

Table 12. River Moy - 1960 - 1967  
Composition of stocks.

	Age Group in Sea Winters				Previous spawners
	1+	2	2+	3	
1960	79.2	7.4	8.9	0.1	4.4
1961	79.9	7.5	8.9	+	3.7
1962	79.9	4.9	13.5	0.1	3.6
1963	82.0	7.7	3.0	+	7.3
1964	75.3	5.8	12.7	0.1	6.1
1965	72.7	10.6	9.8	+	6.9
1966	62.2	14.4	12.9	+	10.5
1967	85.9	3.5	5.8	+	4.8
Average 1966 - 1967	76.9	7.7	9.4	-	5.9

Table 13. River Shannon.  
Age composition of stocks - 1960-61, 1963-64, 1965, 1967

	Age Group in Sea Winters				Previous spawners
	1+	2	2+	3	
1960	80.9	11.0	2.5	1.2	4.4
1961	83.0	13.5	2.0	0.1	1.0
1963	83.8	9.1	2.4	0.4	4.5
1964	79.0	12.1	7.0	-	1.9
1965	76.4	7.7	11.4	-	4.5
1967	92.1	4.5	3.0	-	0.4

Table 14. Smolt age composition of adult salmon from three river systems for the year 1967.

	Age of Smolts		
	1	2	3
River Moy	13.9	84.9	1.2
River Shannon	8.5	84.4	7.1
River Erne	2.5	94.1	2.4

Table 15. Mean length and weight for the different age groups (in sea winters) in three river systems for the year 1967. Wt in Kg., Length in cm.

	Age of adults					
	1+		2		2+	
	lt.	wt	lt	wt	lt	wt.
River Moy	59.4	2.6	73.4	4.5	73.9	4.6
River Shannon	63.9	3.0	75.4	4.7	72.1	4.5
River Erne	67.3	3.0	71.2	4.0	72.1	4.3