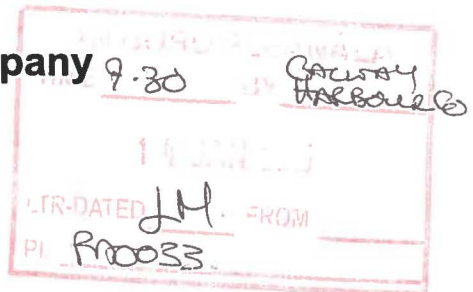




Galway Harbour Company



Galway Harbour Extension

Response to Submissions

of

Inland Fisheries Ireland

11th March 2014
and
3rd December 2014





Iascach Intire Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland



11 March 2014

Mr Kieran Doherty
Executive Officer
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

**Re: Galway Harbour Company, Galway Harbour Extension,
Direct Application to An Bord Pleanála in respect of a Strategic Infrastructure Development**

Dear Mr Doherty

I refer to the Galway Harbour Company's notice of its intention to make an application to An Bord Pleanála for permission for the development of an extension to Galway Harbour at Renmore and Townparks Townlands and on lands to be reclaimed from the foreshore and sea in Galway Bay.

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) is mandated to ensure that the fisheries of the State are protected. "Fisheries" includes all inland fisheries recreational and commercial, sea angling and mollusc fisheries stipulated under the Fisheries Acts, the physical habitat upon which the fishery relies, the facilities and access, the quantity and quality of the water and the plant and animal life on which fish depend for shelter and food and the spawning areas where in fish deposit their eggs. The protective role of IFI relates to all aspects of the aquatic environment and all factors that influence the biotic communities within waters, which in any way relate to the propagation of fish stocks.

Whilst IFI is not opposed to this strategic infrastructure project, it does seek to ensure that the fishery resource is fully protected. Having reviewed the proposal and associated documentation, IFI has the following observations which it requests are borne in mind in relation to the conditions attached to any approval to proceed:

Galway Fishery:

1

IFI had previously expressed concerns that this development will encroach into the zone which is legally an integral part of the Galway Fishery the fishing rights of which are vested in IFI. **The two outer markers** of the Galway Fishery (dated 1669) seem to have been lost or removed during previous developments undertaken within Galway Bay. The marker located at the existing Harbour Enterprise Park may have been covered over by spoil as part of this development. IFI is anxious to have the location of the marker identified and replaced, and similarly the outer marker which was previously located on Mutton Island. In accordance with the Fishery Consolidation Act, 1959, the mouth of a river is defined by an order under Section 10 of the Fisheries Consolidation Act, 1959. The existing River Corrib mouth boundaries as defined by law should be delineated and an examination of **any implications arising from the development** should be undertaken.

2

3

Angling Facilities:

IFI market and promote angling and has invested in developing access routes, including disabled access, bridges and fishing stands for anglers. Currently, spaces for recreational sea fishing in Galway

City are limited due to other public uses of promenade and beach space, shallow water and lack of access. Sea angling within the city boundaries is restricted to shallow water species, such as flounder, and angling for mackerel in the summer months, which is very popular, but due to the aforementioned lack of space leads to crowded piers and angling in unsafe places. The proposed new pier would allow access to a significant increase in usable space, as well as access to deeper water, allowing more species to be targeted. IFI would recommend that public access to the pier be permitted, and that angling is encouraged where it does not interfere with boating or shipping operations. This would constitute a public amenity use, and foster community pride and involvement in the project.

Water Quality:

The EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) requires the protection of the ecological status of river catchments – this encompasses water quality and requires the conservation of habitats for ecological communities. The Western River Basin Management Plan states that the Corrib Estuary's overall chemical status has failed to meet the standard and needs to be restored to at least "good" status by 2021.

4.1. IFI would highlight the importance of ensuring that there is sufficient **capacity** available both within the receiving sewerage network and **at Mutton Island** waste water treatment plant over the full duration of the project to ensure that the ecological integrity of Corrib estuary is protected.

4.2. It is noted that the **pollution mitigation measures** with regard to construction activities have been largely addressed in the EIS and these are generally acceptable subject to close liaison with IFI Galway should the project be approved.

5. Non-native Invasive Species

Non-native invasives are species that have been introduced, generally by human intervention, outside their natural range and whose establishment and spread can threaten native ecosystems. Invasive species represent one of the greatest threats to biodiversity, second only to that caused by direct habitat destruction. They do this by competitively excluding or out-competing our less robust native species, by preying on native species or by altering the natural aquatic or riparian habitat in which they become established.

Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS), fish parasites and diseases are readily transferred from one watercourse to another via angling tackle, boats and protective clothing. These can be very damaging to resident fish stocks, the aquatic habitat and the general environment. Invasive species can also adversely impact the recreational and amenity use of infested watercourses, and hence tourism, by restricting angling, boating, swimming and other water-based leisure pursuits. An example of a proactive policy in this regard would be to prohibit invasive species from inclusion in the landscape design proposals. Landscaping proposals etc. should require the use of native species from local stock.

IFI has concerns that the escalation in marine traffic associated with the harbour extension will increase the volumes of ballast water discharged into Galway Harbour. This in turn will increase the risk of introducing non-native species to the estuary which could cause extensive ecological and economic damage to the aquatic ecosystem. It is noted that Section 7.7.4.18 of the EIS states that Harbour Company will implement an Environmental Management Plan and policy regarding handling of invasive alien species. IFI requests that it is included in the EMP as a notifiable body should any invasive species be detected.

6. Increased Seal Predation:

Section 7.7.6.16 of the EIS states that the design of the proposed harbour construction with steel sheet pile to act as a toe for the rock armour will create a steep drop into the water and thus mitigate against the possibility of seal haul out areas being created in this area. Whilst this design may ensure that no

additional seal haul out areas are created, IFI still has concerns that the narrowing of the channel will increase the likelihood of seal predation on migrating salmonids and may also render migrating smolts more vulnerable to predation by aquatic birds.

7. Observations by IFI personnel over the years would indicate that there are a greater numbers of seals present at the estuary than was observed during the seal study undertaken as part of the EIS. Indeed anglers and IFI staff have reported sporadic sightings of grey seals as far upriver as the Galway Weir during the summer months. A large proportion of the salmon caught by anglers within the Galway Fishery also exhibit claw marks associated with seal predation.

The proposal to monitor the seal populations prior to, during, and for at least two years post construction is welcomed by IFI. However, should it emerge that the rate of seal predation increases as a result of the new layout of Galway Harbour, consideration may have to be given to the introduction of some mitigation measures such as an acoustic deterrent device at the mouth of the river.

8. **Elver Migration:**

There are concerns that the proposed harbour extension may obstruct the upstream migration of elvers, as they typically return to the River Corrib via the coastline. Indeed, existing structures such as the causeway out to Mutton Island may already be interfering with eel migration.

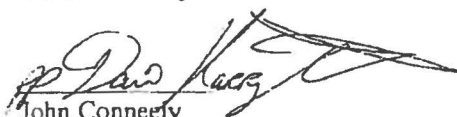
9. IFI would recommend that a monitoring programme is initiated pre construction (April/May) to determine the existing migration pathways utilised by migrating elvers entering the River Corrib.
10. Should it emerge that the elver's migration route could be hindered by the proposed harbour extension, an ongoing emergency recovery programme and elver transportation programme will need to be implemented. It should be borne in mind that stocks of European eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) are at a dangerously low level Europe wide which has led to the introduction of a complete ban on fishing for this species in Ireland and, as such, every protection should be afforded the recovery of this native fish species.

11. **Lough Atalia:**

As per the concerns expressed in relation to elver migration, and also to reduce the likelihood of poaching, IFI would recommend that a fish monitoring programme is implemented during and post construction to ensure that the frequency of returning salmonids entering Lough Atalia rather than travelling straight up the River Corrib does not increase as a result of the harbour extension.

IFI requests an acknowledgement from An Bord Pleanála of receipt of this submission.

Yours sincerely


John Conneely
Director

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Your Ref: 61.PA0033



Mr Kieran Doherty
Executive Officer
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

03rd December 2014

Re: Galway Harbour Extension at Renmore and Townparks Townlands, Galway

Dear Mr Doherty


12. I refer to your recent notification that the Board has recently received additional information concerning the above-mentioned case. In its last correspondence, dated the 11th of March 2014 (attached for your reference), Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) expressed concern that this development will encroach into the zone which is legally an integral part of the Galway Fishery, the fishing rights of which are vested in IFI.

The Galway Fishery is of ancient origin and the earliest reference of the fishery is to be found in the Rolls of the Great Pipe in 1283 during the reign of Edward 1. The Fishery is a several or exclusive fishery in tidal waters extending from Lough Corrib to the sea, approximately 4.5 miles in length.

13. Two stone markers, one sited on Mutton Island and the second on the site of the old Isolation Hospital (now Galway Business Park in the New Docks) mark the extent of the Galway Fishery.

Draft net fishing rights extend beyond these markers into Galway Bay to both a half mile and a one mile radius (see attached map entitled "Plan of the Galway Salmon Fishery"). For the purposes of illustrating how the proposed development will impact upon these fishing rights, IFI has overlaid the plan of the Galway Salmon Fishery onto the proposed Harbour Extension Layout which accompanied the Non-Technical Summary of the planning application. This overlay clearly illustrates how the proposed Harbour extension will encroach into and beyond the half mile radius line of the draft net fishery boundaries. As per its original submission, IFI would like to reiterate the importance of delineating the River Corrib mouth boundaries and the need to examine the implications on the Galway Fishery arising from this proposed development.

Yours faithfully



John Conneely
Director

ABP-GHE-1214





Mr Kieran Doherty
Executive Officer
An Bord Pleanála
64 Marlborough Street
Dublin 1

AN BORD PLEANÁLA	
TIME _____	BY _____
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11 March 2014

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Non-native Invasive Species

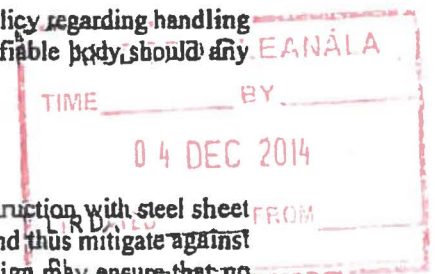
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IFI requests an acknowledgement from An Bord Pleanála of receipt of this submission.

Yours sincerely


John Conneely
Director

ABP-GHE-0314

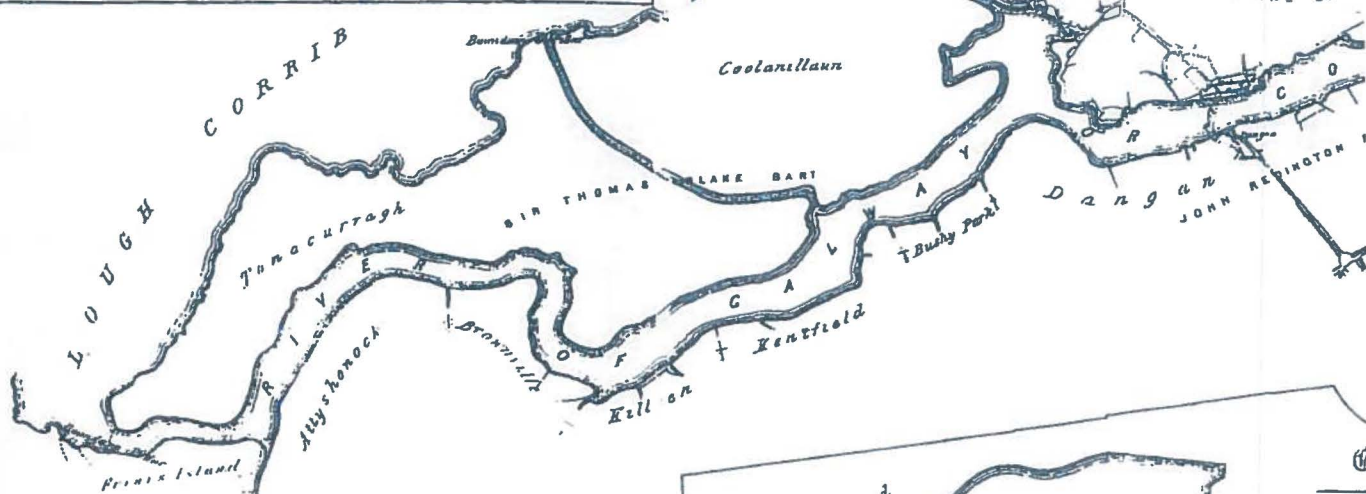


This Map shows the extent of the Galway Fishery, showing the area that Edmund and Thomas Ashworth purchased from the Encumbered Estates Court, where it had been lodged by the Eyre family. By Deed of Conveyance of the 7th August 1852 this Fishery was sold to the Ashworths for £5,000. Its description in the Deed is: "the several Fishery of and in the River of Galway extending from Lough Corrib to the sea, the salmon fishery, the fishing for pike, eel, and all other fish within the said River of Galway in the County of the Town of Galway, and the exclusive right of fishing for all manner of fish therein as fully as such fishery and right of fishing are granted by Letters Patent on the twenty-ninth May in the twenty-first year of his late Majesty King Charles II, together with the fish reservoir, plot of ground, and small island, garden, new weirs and cribs To Hold the same forever freed from a yearly annuity of £40 now payable by Eyre's Flour Mills. . . ."

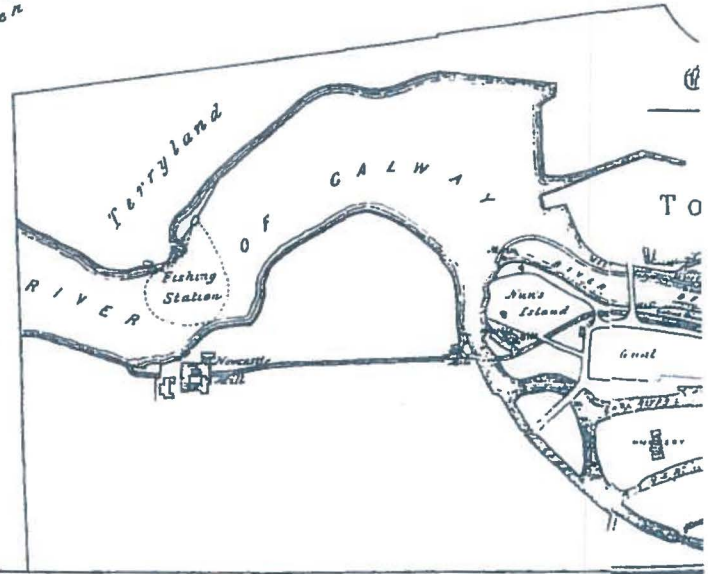
The extremity of the lake boundary is shown as from Annagh at the mouth of what is known as "the Old river" (which means the original river) to the mouth of the Friars' Cut; and then to the monument at Angliham. "The Old River" has retained its name despite the fact that the Friars' Cut has been in existence for many centuries.

The Reader will also note the length of the Wood Quay, which extended to the end of Eyre Street.

This Map was attached to the above Conveyance. It shows that the jurisdiction of the Fishery does not extend from the Parkava Lough to the University Road Bridge. I have included the Map to show new Galway citizens the extent of the Fishery (See page 42).

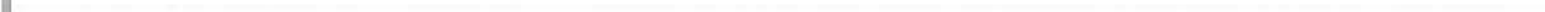


Plan
OF THE
GALWAY SALMON FISHERY,
EXTENDING FROM LOUGH CORRIB TO THE SEA
Belonging to Thomas Ashworth Esq^r





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66 Inland Fisheries Ireland

Galway Fishery:

- **Two outer markers**

R1. Response:-

The location of the markers has been re-established and the markers will be reinstated.

- **Any implications arising from the development**

R2. Response:-

The loss of fishing ground is acknowledged. The monetary loss, if any, accordingly will be addressed with the IFI.

- **Angling Facilities**

R3. Response:-

Access to the marina breakwater, marina pier and adjacent boatyard on the Western side and access to all of the open space area on the Eastern side as far as, but not including the Fishing Yard and Pier, i.e. all the shoreline amenity areas shown on Open Space Layout Drawing 2139-2131 will be available for angling. Access to Port Security areas will not be provided for angling in the interest of safety and security.

- **Capacity ... at Mutton Island**
- **Pollution mitigation measures with regard to construction**

R4. Response:-

- (i) Adequate capacity is available at Mutton Island Sewage Treatment Plant to cater for the proposed development and to ensure that water quality in the River Corrib is protected.
- (ii) When the project is approved, a meeting will be held with IFI confirming the necessary monitoring and mitigation measures, which have been proposed.

- **Non-native Invasive Species**

R5. Response:-

One such recent invasive non-native species to Galway Bay is *Didemnum vexillum* which is a type of sea squirt. It was recorded near Kilcolgan at an oyster farm location. It is native to the Far East and was more than likely brought in with oyster spat. There are no records on non-native species in the vicinity of the Galway Docks. The Harbour Master will introduce a

bye law requiring all trans-National commercial vessels to discharge ballast waters 20 km off the shore thereby ensuring that any non-native species will not be able to colonise substrates around the area of the Galway Harbour Extension site. There is no method to control non-native species that attach to the hulls of vessels.

- **Increased Seal Predation**

R6. Response:-

Cormorants (*Phalacrocorax carbo*) are common fish predators and occur in both marine and freshwater habitats. There is a breeding colony on Deer Island in Inner Galway Bay off the Clare coast and in April 2010, the colony was estimated at 110 occupied nests.

Cormorants have been identified as significant predators on Salmon smolts in certain fisheries (e.g. the River Bann in Northern Ireland) as the fish depart their mother rivers and head for marine feeding grounds. The migration period for Salmon smolts on the Corrib is well established and data on numbers of smolts running down the River Corrib for a number of years were reviewed.

Inland Fisheries Ireland raised concerns that the proposed development could impact smolt numbers by restricting the fish to a smaller area of sea water than they have access to at present and thereby increase likely contact with predators such as Cormorants and seals. Smolt data (numbers and dates) were provided by the Marine Institute. A study was undertaken to address this issue and involved making regular observations in the vicinity of the proposed development area to record numbers of Cormorants and to observe birds to try to determine what they were feeding on. The opportunity was taken to make observations on numbers of seals, cetaceans and otters present at the same time in the same area.

Numbers of Cormorants and Seals at the site

Cormorant numbers were regularly recorded in the vicinity of the proposed development site. Birds overflying the area were also noted. Observations were made with x10 binoculars from the end on Nimmo's Pier and the duration of each observation period was 15 minutes. Observations were made between the layby and the new slipway within the Galway Enterprise Park and broad scale sweeps were made between the slip, Hare Island and Mutton Island in calm weather. Maximum numbers (+50) were recorded between October 2010 to mid-January 2011 when there was a shoal of Sprat in the area while no birds were recorded on a number of dates throughout the survey period. Salmon smolts annually migrate out of the Corrib system during the months of March and April. Comparison of the cormorant and the smolt numbers shows no correlation with periods of smolt migration through the area and indicate that in the Corrib Estuary, Cormorants are not a significant predator on salmon smolts. From the observations made of birds overflying the area, it appears that Cormorants have a greater preference for feeding within Lough Corrib than in the estuary.

Maximum salmon smolt numbers in 2010 peaked at 1250 on 8 May. 1301 smolts was the highest number recorded in 2011 on 19th April.

The same field methodology as for Cormorants described above was used to assess seal numbers in the area. When making the observations both at the mouth of the Corrib and during the sweeps between the Galway Enterprise Park, Hare and Mutton Islands, the observer also checked for otters and cetaceans. Porpoises were seen on one occasion and a

single dolphin was noted several times in the area between Hare Island and Mutton Island. A single otter was seen several times in the area off the head of Nimmo's Pier and one individual was seen swimming in the open sea off Nimmo's Pier in the direction of Mutton Island. As for Cormorants, maximum numbers of seals coincided with the presence of shoaling Sprat between the period October 2010 to January 2011. Outside this period, seal numbers were low at the site and no seals were observed on several occasions. Comparison of the seal and the smolt numbers shows no correlation with periods of smolt migration through the area and indicates that in the Corrib Estuary, seals are not a significant predator on Salmon smolts.

- **A greater number of seals present at the estuary**

R7. Response

Our seal survey results indicate a general population of 0-5 Common Seal in the area. However, during periods of shoaling of species such as spratt, the number could be as great as 50. Occasional Grey Seals have been observed in the Corrib.

We confirm the proposal to monitor the seal population during and for at least two years post construction. Should it emerge that the number of seal increases as a result of the new layout of Galway Harbour, consideration will be given to the introduction of some mitigation measures such as an acoustic deterrent device at the mouth of the river, on then NPWS consent. Any additional man-made noise will need to be carefully examined and is generally not best practice. The use of such a device may have unintended consequences for other species such as the Otter. The introduction of such a device would require the consent of DAHG and is beyond the scope of the EIS. The design of the marina breakwater wall and the outer sea walls are such as to mitigate against seal haul out to curtail this problem arising.

- **Elver Migration**

R8. Response:

Prior to the construction of the Mutton Island causeway, migratory fish species such as elvers, eels, salmon and lamprey could swim through the passage between South Park and Mutton Island when there was sufficient water present. This would have been for ca 8 hours in every tidal cycle. The construction of the Mutton Island causeway has prevented this and fish must swim around Mutton Island to gain access to the River Corrib.

Returning fish will seek out the Corrib River water and as the proposed harbour extension will not cut off the flow of the river water, either arriving or departing fish will still be able to locate the river waters.

We note that the freshwater flow will be narrower and deeper in the context of the new development. This improved concentration of Corrib water will assist elver, returning salmon and lamprey to move up the estuary faster.

- **Elver Monitoring Programme**

R9. Response:-

When the project is approved, a meeting will be held with IFI to agree on the detail of an elver monitoring programme.

- **Elvers Migration Route**

R10. Response:-

As part of additional mitigation to reduce the impact on elver migration and other fish species, a wildlife pass has been incorporated into the design and the IFI has been forwarded design details and a description of the pass.

- **Salmonids Entering Lough Atalia**

R11. Response:-

When the project is approved, a meeting will be held with IFI to agree on the detail of a salmonid monitoring programme in this regard.

2nd IFI Submission on 3rd December 2014

- **Additional Information**

R12. Response:-

The points raised are accepted.

- **Two Stone Markers**

R13. Response:-

Accepted and addressed at R.1 above.

- **The proposed Harbour extension will encroach into ... the draft net fishery boundaries**

R14. Response:-

Accepted and addressed at R.2 above.