



Department of  
**Agriculture, Environment  
and Rural Affairs**

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# DAERA Inland Fisheries 2021 Annual Report

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Inland Fisheries Responsibilities

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Inland Fisheries is responsible, under the provisions of the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966, for the salmon and inland fisheries of Northern Ireland. In accordance with the Fisheries Act, DAERA has powers for the supervision and protection of fisheries and for fostering the establishment and development of fisheries.

It provides advice and guidance on matters relating to the conservation, protection, development and promotion of salmon and inland fisheries (excluding the Loughs Agency areas of Foyle and Carlingford) to angling clubs, fishery owners, and a range of other water users and interested parties.



## 1.2 Public Angling Estate

DAERA also has the power under the Fisheries Act to acquire and improve facilities for angling for local and visiting anglers. Inland Fisheries are responsible for the management and development of Northern Ireland's Public Angling Estate (PAE) which

has over 90 waters (including both lakes and rivers) where it owns or leases the fishing rights for those waters. An annual programme of work is in place to maintain and develop facilities for anglers at these sites. There are some waters in the PAE where DAERA has management agreements in place with angling clubs or community groups to manage the fishery on their behalf.

## 1.3 Background

Following the Review of Public Administration, the Fisheries Conservancy Board (FCB) was closed down in June 2009 and its functions and staff were transferred to Inland Fisheries Branch within the Department of Culture, Art and Leisure. In May 2016 in accordance with Departments Act (NI) 2016 the number of Civil Service departments was reduced from 12 to 9 and Inland Fisheries Branch transferred to the new Department of



Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).

Inland Fisheries is one of 14 branches within Marine and Fisheries Division (MFD) which is part of DAERA's Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group (EMFG). The Division is responsible for managing the sustainable use of the marine environment and the promotion, protection, enhancement and sustainable use of all fish stocks, inland and at sea (including aquaculture and fish health).

Success for Marine and Fisheries Division will see delivery on the Department's purpose of 'sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone' and, thereby, improving the lives of the people living in Northern Ireland.

The Department has the four following key Strategic Priorities, which align to the Programme for Government Outcomes whilst also covering the Department's regulatory,

governance and resource management responsibilities.

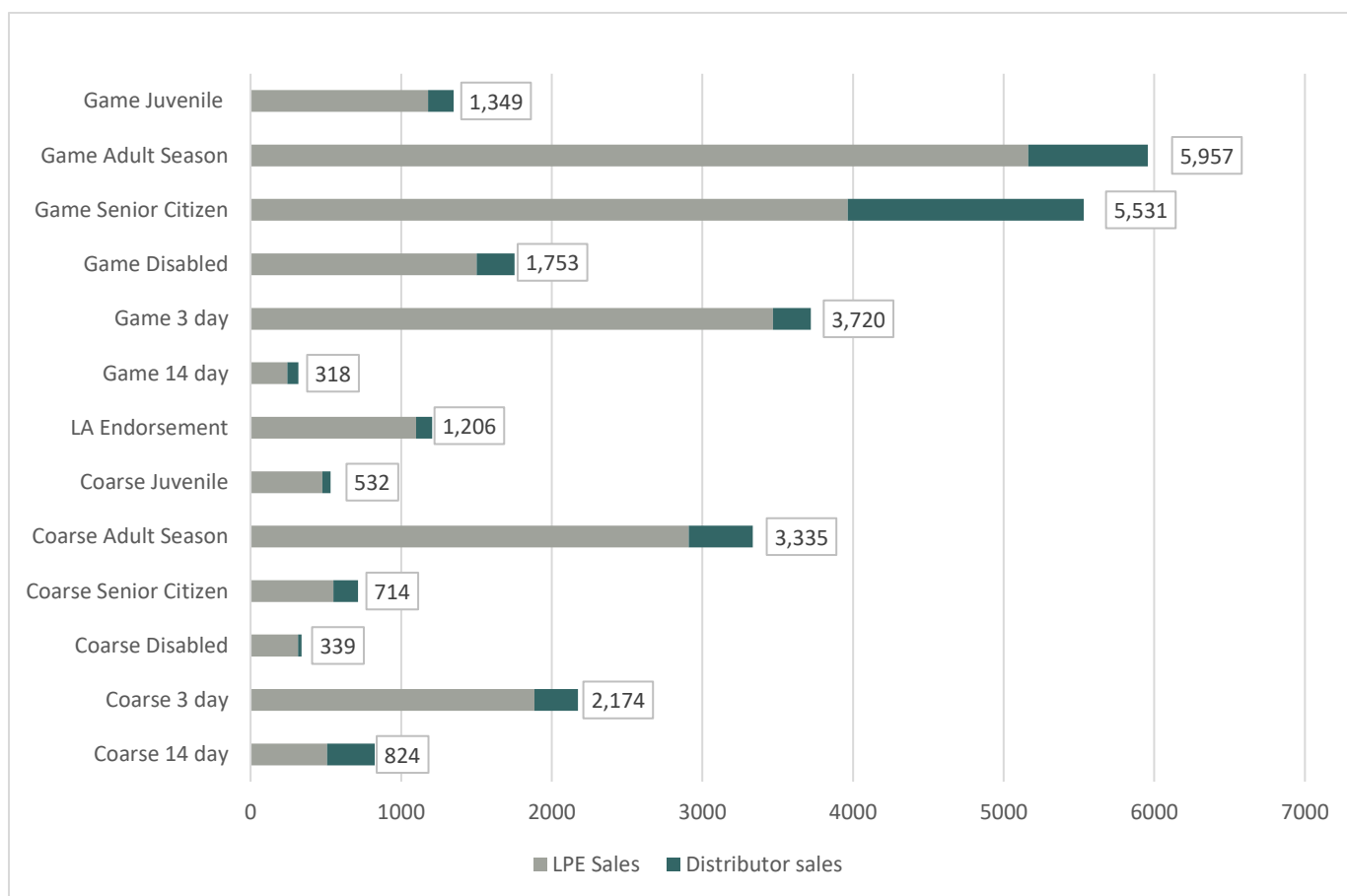


## 2. LICENCE & PERMITS

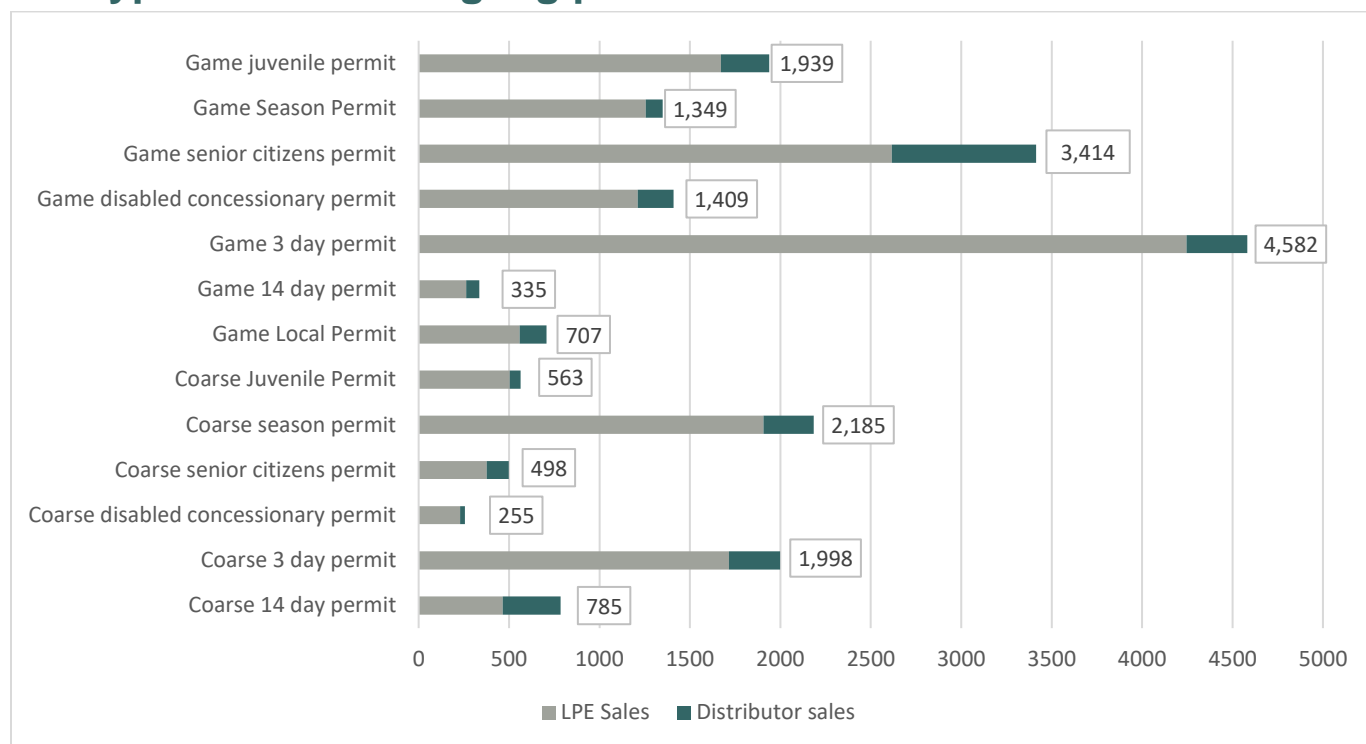
### 2.1 Number of DAERA angling licences and permits sold for 2018 to 2021

	2018	2019	2020	2021
Licences	24,198	25,938	28,169	27,752
Permits	16,876	18,686	20,566	20,019
Bush Tickets	515	803	952	857
<b>Total</b>	<b>41,589</b>	<b>45,427</b>	<b>49,687</b>	<b>48,628</b>

### 2.2 Type of DAERA angling licences sold 2021



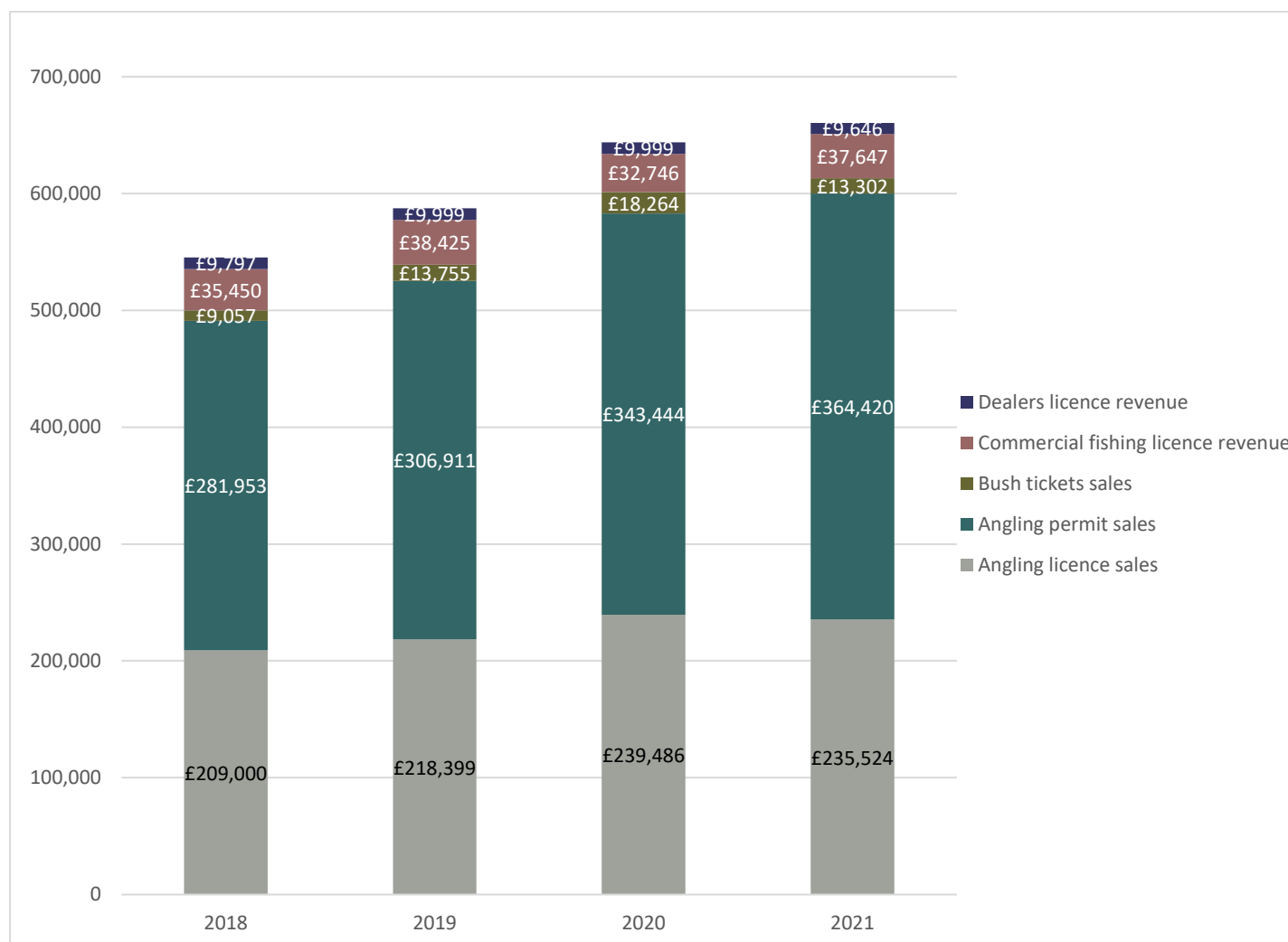
## 2.3 Type of DAERA angling permits sold 2021



## 2.4 Table – Total of DAERA licence and permits sold in 2021

	Licence	Permit	Day Ticket	Total
<b>Game Juvenile</b>	1,349	1,939	-	<b>3,288</b>
<b>Game Season</b>	5,957	1,349	-	<b>7,306</b>
<b>Game Senior Citizen</b>	5,531	3,414	-	<b>8,945</b>
<b>Game Disabled</b>	1,753	1,409	-	<b>3,162</b>
<b>Game 3 day</b>	3,720	4,582	-	<b>8,302</b>
<b>Game 14 day</b>	318	335	-	<b>653</b>
<b>Local Area Permit</b>	-	707	-	<b>707</b>
<b>LA Endorsement</b>	1,206	-	-	<b>1,206</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>19,834</b>	<b>13,735</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>33,569</b>
<b>Coarse Juvenile</b>	532	563	-	<b>1,095</b>
<b>Coarse Season</b>	3,335	2,185	-	<b>5,520</b>
<b>Coarse Senior Citizen</b>	714	498	-	<b>1,212</b>
<b>Coarse Disabled</b>	339	255	-	<b>594</b>
<b>Coarse 3 day</b>	2,174	1,998	-	<b>4,172</b>
<b>Coarse 14 day</b>	824	785	-	<b>1,609</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>7,918</b>	<b>6,284</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>14,202</b>
<b>Bush Tickets</b>	-	-	857	<b>857</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>27,752</b>	<b>20,019</b>	<b>857</b>	<b>48,628</b>

## 2.5 DAERA licence and permits sales value and revenue generated 2018 - 2021

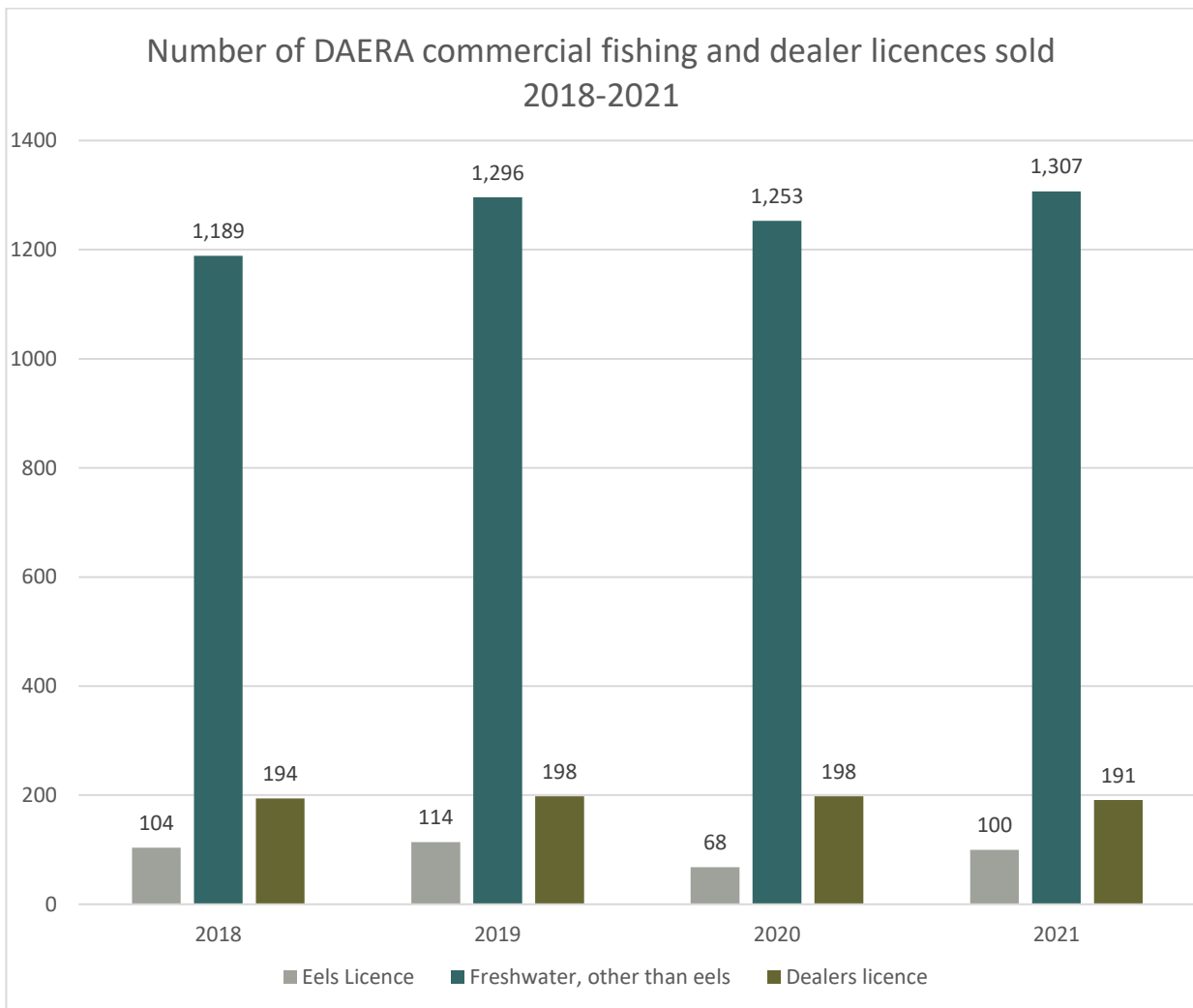


Year	2018	2019	2020	2021
Angling licence sales	£209,000.00	£218,399.00	£239,486.00	£235,524.00
Angling permit sales	£281,953.00	£306,911.00	£343,444.00	£364,420.00
Bush tickets sales	£9,057.00	£13,755.00	£18,264.00	£13,302.00
<b>Angling Sales Total</b>	<b>£500,010.00</b>	<b>£539,065.00</b>	<b>£601,194.00</b>	<b>£613,246.00</b>
Minus 20% VAT on permits and Bush tickets	£58,202.00	£64,133.20	£72,341.60	£75,544.40
<b>Angling Revenue Total</b>	<b>£441,808.00</b>	<b>£474,931.80</b>	<b>£528,852.40</b>	<b>£537,701.60</b>
Commercial fishing licence revenue	£35,450.00	£38,425.00	£32,746.00	£37,647.00
Dealers licence revenue	£9,797.00	£9,999.00	£9,999.00	£9,645.50
<b>Commercial Total</b>	<b>£45,247.00</b>	<b>£48,424.00</b>	<b>£42,745.00</b>	<b>£47,292.50</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£487,055.00</b>	<b>£523,355.80</b>	<b>£571,597.40</b>	<b>£584,994.10</b>

## 2.6. Commercial fishing and dealer licences

DAERA issues commercial fishing licences for eel, salmon and other freshwater species fishing.

- The number of eel licences issued in 2021 is 100.
- The number of freshwater commercial licences issued in 2021 increased by 4% compared to the number issued in 2020.
- To assist conservation efforts, legislation was introduced in 2014 that prohibits commercial netting of salmon. There have been no licences issued for coastal salmon nets since 2013.
- Dealer licences, needed to sell freshwater fish and wild salmon to the public, are issued by DAERA in the DAERA jurisdiction. A dealer licence covers all vendors from fish vans to large supermarkets. In 2021, 191 dealer licences were issued.





# 3. ENFORCEMENT

## 3. Protection and enforcement

### 3.1 Enforcement

**Table 3.1 Enforcement activity on DAERA and private waters 2017/18 to 2021/22**

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>DAERA PAE waters</b>					
Rod Licences checked	2,601	2,359	2,504	2,170	2,410
DAERA permits checked	2,558	2,281	2,417	2,138	2,404
Detections of illegal activity	88	106	152	127	122
<b>Private waters</b>					
Rod licences checked	1,271	1,061	1,141	1,172	1,028
Detections of illegal activity	39	76	49	89	59
<b>All waters</b>					
Boat patrols	134	125	179	200	261
Coastal shore patrols	239	20	7	37	52
illegal fishing nets seized	6	291	185	78	13
Length of illegal panel net seized (metres)	4,325	19,976	9,323	3,650	60
Longlines seized	0	0	5	25	0

- Enforcement activity is both proactive and reactive; regular patrols are conducted to monitor commercial fishermen and anglers to ensure compliance with the 1966 Fisheries Act and Fisheries Regulations.
- DAERA enforcement officers work on both DAERA PAE waters and private waters in the DAERA jurisdiction.
- In 2021/22, there were 2,410 rod licences checked in DAERA PAE waters and 1,028 licences checked on private waters.

### 3. Protection and enforcement

#### 3.2 Inspections

**Table 3.2 - Number of inspections 2017/18 to 2021/22**

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
<b>Number of inspections</b>					
Commercial fish dealers inspections	54	46	40	36	37
Water abstraction site inspections	60	157	183	130	147
<b>Total</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>184</b>

- Regular inspections are carried out at commercial dealers to ensure that all freshwater fish being sold have been caught legally.
- The number of inspections carried out in 2021/22 (184) represents a 10.85% increase on the number carried out in 2020/21 (166).

### 3. Protection and enforcement

#### 3.3 Prosecutions and enforcement action 2017/18 to 2021/22

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Cases progressed for prosecution	24	14	16	17	14
Convictions	21	14	16	17	4*
Warning letters issued	51	35	35	19	12**
Advice letter given	73	95	173	168	117**

\*There are currently cases pending with the PPSNI.

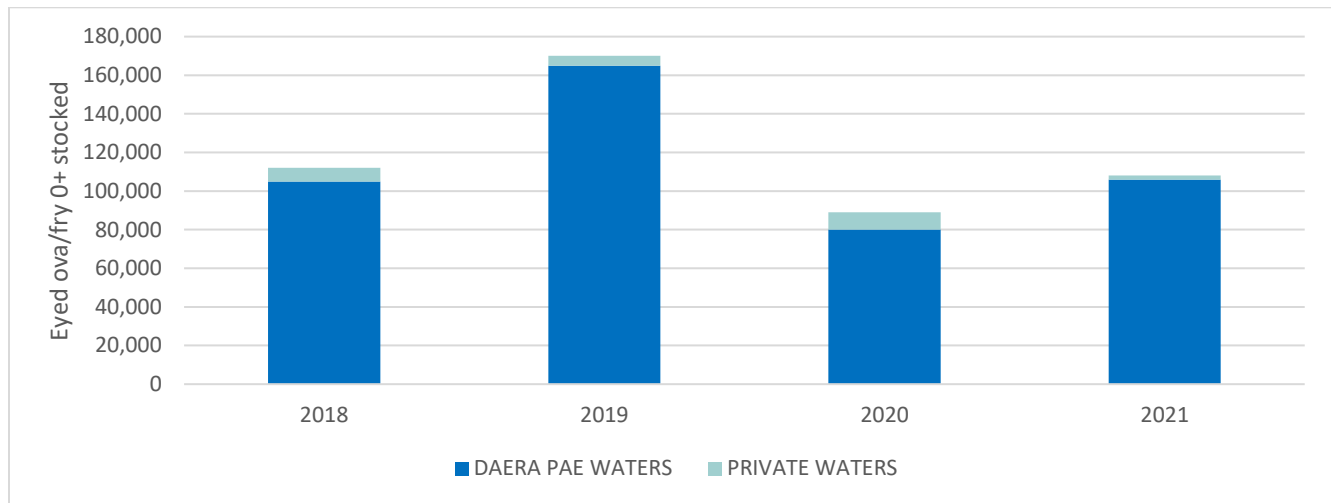
\*\*There are currently letters pending for issue.

- Where appropriate, DAERA prepares cases for prosecution for consideration by the Public Prosecution Service NI.
- DAERA may deal with less serious breaches of legislation by means of advisement and warning letters.

# 4. DAERA fish farms and hatchery

## 4.1. Movanager Fish Farm: eyed ova/ fry 0+

### Number of eyed ova/ fry 0+ trout stocked from Movanager Fish Farm 2018 - 2021

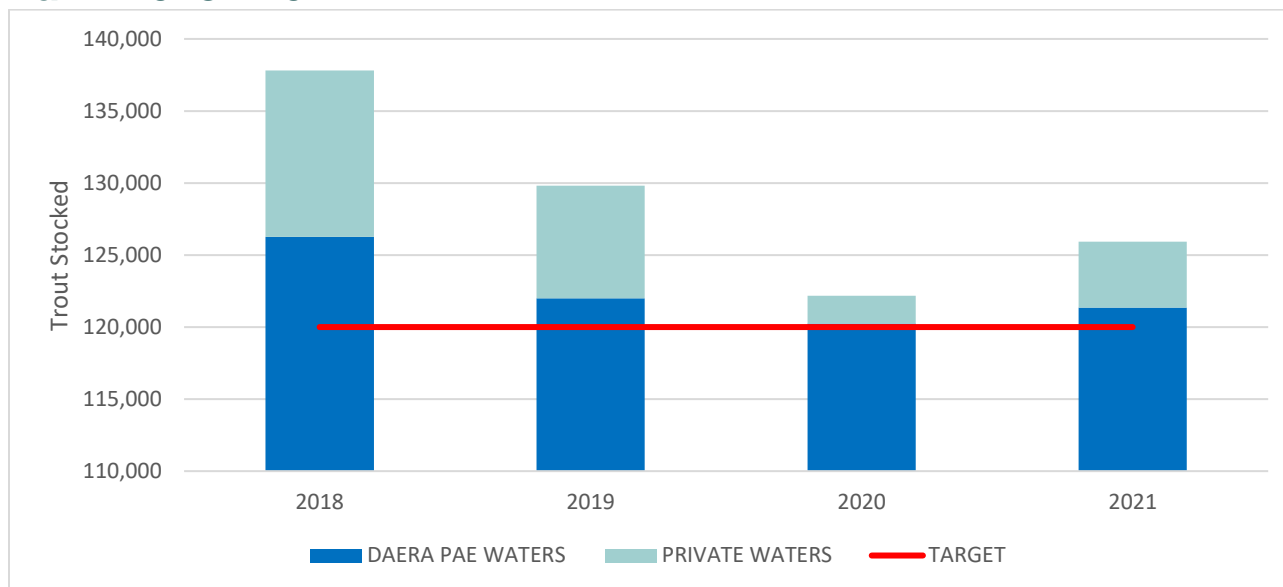


Eyed ova/ fry 0+		2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>DAERA PAE Waters</b>	Brown trout	0	140,000	80,000	106,000
	Rainbow trout	105,000	25,000	0	0
	<b>Total (PAE Waters)</b>	<b>105,000</b>	<b>165,000</b>	<b>80,000</b>	<b>106,000</b>
<b>Private Waters</b>	Brown trout	7,000	5,000	7,000	2,000
	Rainbow trout	0	0	2,000	100
	<b>Total (private waters)</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>9,000</b>	<b>2,100</b>
<b>All Waters</b>	Brown trout	7,000	145,000	87,000	108,000
	Rainbow trout	105,000	25,000	2,000	100
	<b>Total (All Waters)</b>	<b>112,000</b>	<b>170,000</b>	<b>89,000</b>	<b>108,100</b>

- There were 108,100 eyed ova/ fry 0+ trout stocked from Movanager Fish Farm in 2021.
- This represents an increase of 21% on the total number stocked in 2020.
- Of the total eyed ova/ fry 0+ trout stocked in 2021, 98% were stocked to DAERA waters with the remainder going to private waters.
- No eyed ova/fry 0+ rainbow trout were stocked from Movanager Fish Farm into DAERA PAE Waters in 2021.

## 4.2. Movanagerh Fish Farm: takeable sized trout

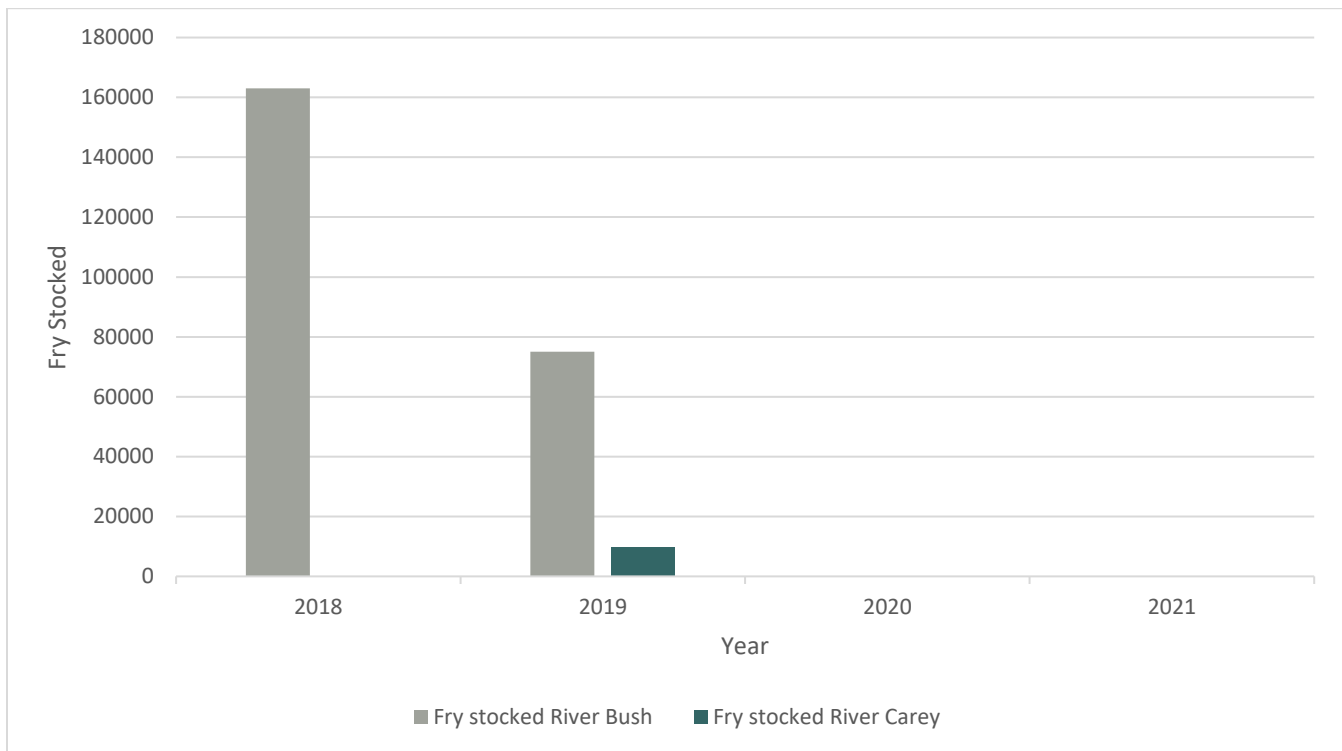
### Number of takeable sized trout stocked from Movanagerh Fish Farm 2018 - 2021



Takeable sized trout		2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>DAERA PAE Waters</b>	Brown trout	86,250	79,750	82,750	82,250
	Rainbow trout	40,000	42,250	37,500	39,100
	<b>Total (PAE Waters)</b>	<b>126,250</b>	<b>122,000</b>	<b>120,250</b>	<b>121,350</b>
<b>Private Waters</b>	Brown trout	4,936	4,149	1,370	2,633
	Rainbow trout	6,628	3,655	546	1,939
	<b>Total (private waters)</b>	<b>11,564</b>	<b>7,804</b>	<b>1,916</b>	<b>4,572</b>
<b>All Waters</b>	Brown trout	91,186	83,899	84,120	84,883
	Rainbow trout	46,628	45,905	38,046	41,039
	<b>Total (All Waters)</b>	<b>137,814</b>	<b>129,804</b>	<b>122,166</b>	<b>125,922</b>

- DAERA Public Angling Estate (PAE) waters refers the 90 waters in the DAERA estate. Private waters include non-DAERA waters and clubs within and outside the DAERA jurisdiction.
- Movanagerh Fish Farm produces brown and rainbow trout to stock the Department's public angling estate, although some fish are also supplied to private waters.
- DAERA has a target to stock 120,000 takeable sized (25 cm or longer) trout per year for recreational anglers.

### 4.3. Number of salmon fry released from Bushmills Hatchery 2018 to 2021

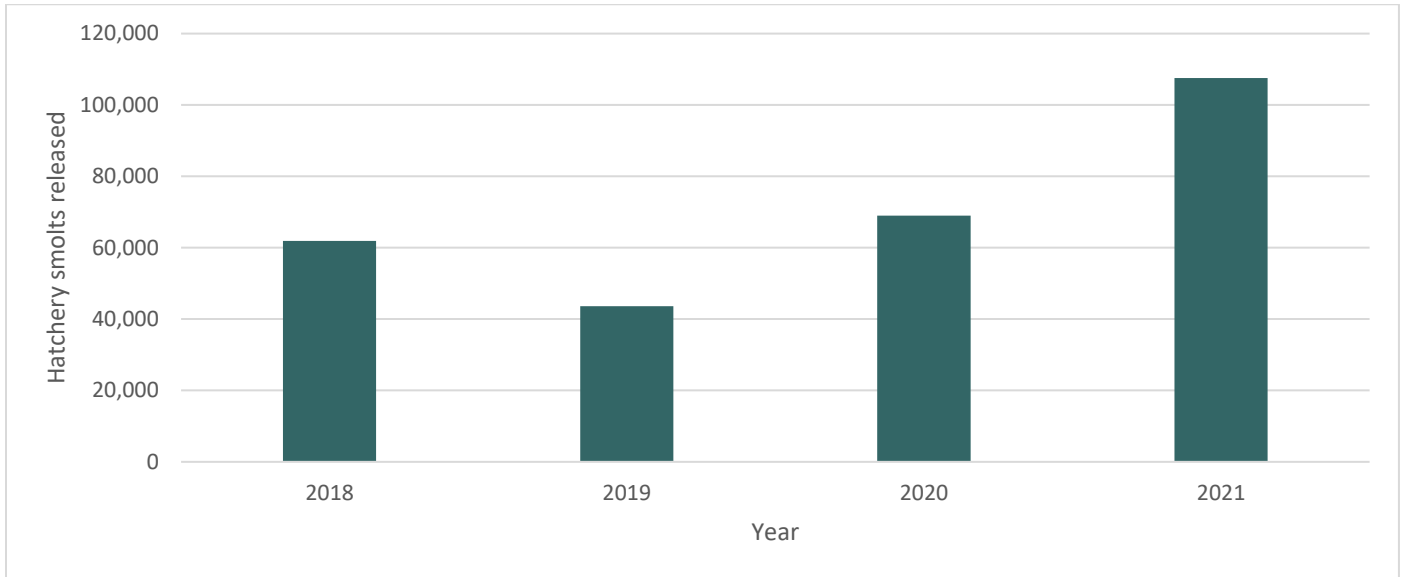


- DAERA operates a hatchery at the River Bush Salmon Station. The hatchery facilitates the rearing of juvenile salmon for release back into the River Bush as part of investigations into Atlantic salmon life history and survival.
- Release of fry to the River Bush was completed as part of a long-term experiment to help determine stocking efficacy. The experiment was suspended in 2020, in line with NASCO principles.
- 9,800 fry of Carey origin were released into the Carey in 2019. This was part of a mark-recapture stocking experiment.



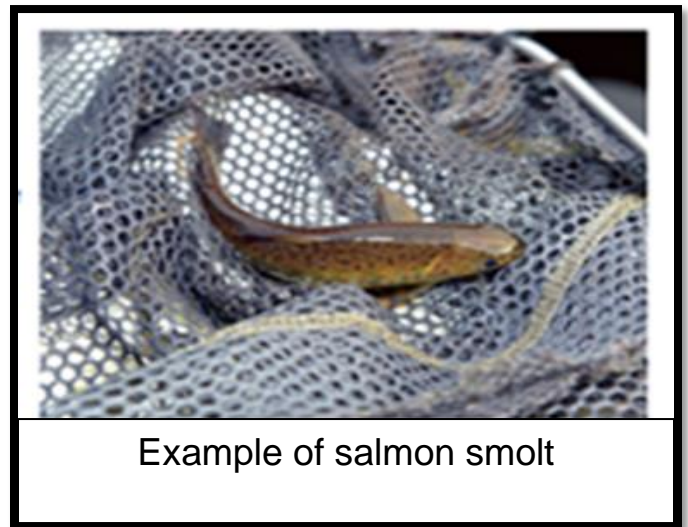
Example of salmon fry

## 4.4. Number of salmon smolts released from Bushmills Hatchery 2018 to 2021



Year	2018	2019	2020	2021
Salmon smolts released	61,912	43,579	69,031	107,505

- The Bushmills Hatchery also releases reared salmon smolts into the River Bush as part of the long-term salmon monitoring programme.
- The number of salmon smolts released in the River Bush in 2021 was 107,505.
- This is an increase on the numbers released in 2020 (69,031) of 55.7%



# 5. LEGISLATION

## 5.1. Legislation

Under the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966, DAERA is charged with the establishment, development, supervision and protection of fisheries within its jurisdiction (the Loughs Agency has regulatory authority in the Foyle and Carlingford catchments). Within DAERA, Inland Fisheries Branch is responsible for discharging those functions relating to inland fisheries. There are also several pieces of subordinate legislation which further regulate activity on such fisheries.

The principle sets are the Fisheries Regulations (N.I.) 2014 which regulate angling and commercial activity and the Eel Fishing Regulations (N.I.) 2010 which set out requirements for commercial eel fishing (currently restricted to Lough Neagh). DAERA also manages (directly or in-directly) 90 publicly available fisheries which are governed through the Public Angling Estate (PAE) Regulations (N.I.) 2005.

While no new (or amendments to current) legislation progressed in 2021, there were a number of policy developments which required legal consideration and which will lead to legislative amendments in 2022/23. The most significant of these were the final drafting of Fishery Management Plans for Loughs Neagh and Erne which were consulted on throughout 2021 with the Salmon and Inland Fisheries Forum and other various stakeholders.

In other legal work, a number of leases were renewed ensuring access for anglers at various PAE sites and the Branch also authorised several change-of-use designations for existing fisheries. Creightons Green (Co. Down), Shaws Lake (Co. Armagh), Bird Lake (Co. Fermanagh), Mossley Mill, (Co. Antrim) and Bradleys Lake (Co. Derry) were re-designated as rainbow trout fisheries (meaning that they could remain open all year for the purposes of angling for rainbow trout). Lower Conlig Reservoir, Co. Down was re-designated as a coarse fishery.

## 5.2. Finance

Inland Fisheries manage a resource budget of approximately £1m which contributes to the management of PAE infrastructure; provision of an outreach and angling promotion programme; the upkeep of fish farms at Movanager and Bushmills and premises at Riversdale, Castlewellan, Lough Neagh and Portadown; enforcement activity and NASCO works. A small capital budget is also available to replenish fleet and to upgrade infrastructure. In 2021, this included the refurbishment of facilities at Bushmills Salmon Station and the installation of navigational plotters on the Lough Neagh enforcement boat.

### Lough Neagh Covid Support Scheme

Following the launch of the Lough Neagh Covid Support Scheme for commercial fishermen by the Minister, Inland Fisheries, in partnership with DAERA Sea Fisheries Policy and Grants Branch, issued a total of 175 applications. 67 applications were returned by the closing date of 31 May 2021. 63 applications met the criteria, and 63 letters of offers totalling £240,399.94 have been processed and paid prior to the closing date of 30 September 2021.



## 6. COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND EVENTS

### 6.1. Minister visits Salmon Station as part of centenary celebrations

On 2 October 2021, the Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Edwin Poots MLA, visited the River Bush Salmon Station in Bushmills, as part of the Northern Ireland Centenary celebrations.

The station marked the Centenary milestone with an invitation for members of the public to come along and experience a behind the scenes peak. Covid precautions were strictly adhered to and around one hundred visitors and VIP guests took the tour.



Photo: Minister Poots is pictured with (left to right) Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens Councillor Richard Holmes, Mr Anthony Macnaghten and DAERA Permanent Secretary Anthony Harbinson.

Since the River Bush Salmon Research Station was established in 1973, it has provided a significant contribution towards the establishment and continuing development of an evidence base necessary for Atlantic salmon management, not only in Northern Ireland and the British Isles but across the range of Atlantic salmon in the North Atlantic.

DAERA and Agri-Food and Biosciences Institute (AFBI) scientists are uncovering the secret lives of salmon through their research at this station and AFBI's research on stock/recruitment relationships is at the forefront of international efforts to define salmon spawning targets and test their applicability to salmon management throughout the north-east Atlantic.

Recent salmon research conducted at Bushmills has focused on important contemporary issues such as the impact of climate change on salmon stocks. Additionally, scientists based at the station have been using exciting new scientific techniques, such as acoustic telemetry, to investigate critical aspects of salmon biology including the survival of smolts in freshwater and the pre-spawning behaviour of adult salmon.

## 6.2. Community Outreach Angling Events Fund

Early in the 2010's, DAERA Inland Fisheries developed a Community Outreach Programme aimed at encouraging increased participation in the sport of angling, particularly amongst children and young people, people with disabilities and those from areas of social disadvantage. Girls and women are also a target group for inclusion, as they are hugely under-represented in the demographics of angling, with less than 10% of DAERA angling licence holders being female.

The physical and mental health and well-being benefits of angling are well documented and it soon became clear that organising events introducing individuals and groups to angling could be inhibited by the financial costs. These costs include provision of appropriate fishing tackle and bait, safety equipment, qualified coaches to supervise events, venue hire and transport and in many cases these costs limited the feasibility of many proposed outreach events.

To encourage successful outreach events giving individuals and groups a first experience of angling, Inland Fisheries introduced the Community Outreach Events Fund in 2016. Through the fund, DAERA Inland Fisheries can provide financial support for events up to a maximum of £500.

Applications, with estimates of costs to be covered, are assessed and if the criteria are met, a letter of offer is issued. Funding is released by DAERA Inland Fisheries upon receipt of proof of payment of invoices.

The Fund has been very well received by stakeholders and since its introduction, DAERA Inland Fisheries have supported Community Outreach Events to the tune of around £100k and approximately 10,000 individuals have had a first experience of angling at these events.

Over the last two years Covid 19 pandemic restrictions have severely impacted on the numbers of Outreach events being held, but the Fund has re-opened and it is hoped that we will return to the previous levels of activity.

The table below details the number of events supported by the Fund over the last 3 years:

Year	2019	2020	2021
Number of events	70	0	35