

Press Release from Minister Lenihan, Kerry, 25th May 2010

Minister Lenihan proposes a Pilot Salmon Fishery in Castlemaine Harbour in 2010

Conor Lenihan, the Minister of State at the Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources, responded to requests on how a commercial salmon fishery could be operated on stocks in the Castlemaine Harbour Special Area of Conservation. Speaking at a meeting with local fishermen in Cromane Community Centre, the Minister advised that he has sought details from the fisheries boards as to how the fishery can be undertaken in a sustainable manner, maximizing the opportunities for commercial fishing while ensuring that stocks are not over-exploited.

The Minister said that, under section 18 of the Fisheries Act 1980, a pilot fishery will be permitted in a particular area of Castlemaine Harbour to determine how a salmon fishery could be operated on salmon stocks in the harbour, making the most of the opportunities for commercial fishing while ensuring that at-risk stocks are not compromised and surplus stocks are not over-exploited.

The pilot fishery would identify the proportion of salmon in catches from the Laune, Maine and other rivers entering Castlemaine. As part of the exercise additional genetic analysis on the salmon populations on the Behy and Emlagh rivers will be undertaken to confirm if both stocks are discrete from stocks in other rivers.

A detailed scientific and management plan including protocols for the operation of the pilot fishery will need to be drafted in consultation with the South Western Regional Fisheries Board and the Cromane fishermen.

The Minister said **“the results from this analysis will inform all stakeholders (commercial and recreational) on where a commercial fishery might best operate in the common estuary while safeguarding the spawning requirements of stocks”**.

The Minister added that he **“looked forward to receiving the Boards’ detailed management plan which will take the biological concerns into account and will specify the management protocols for the operation of the fishery, including the protection requirements. This plan will need to be drafted in consultation with the South Western Regional Fisheries Board, the Central Fisheries Board and the Cromane fishermen”**.

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