



**Iascach Iníre Éireann
Inland Fisheries Ireland**

MARINE LICENCE VETTING COMMITTEE:

MUL260006 - Uisce Éireann, Marine and Intertidal site investigation surveys in Liscannor Bay, County Clare.

Request for observations from Ms. Paula O'Toole (MARA) dated 06.03.2026

Overview

A maritime usage licence is sought to undertake site investigations in order to generate baseline data which will inform the design and siting of a new marine outfall linked to the upgrade of the wastewater treatment plants of Lahinch and Ennistymon. Uisce Éireann proposes to construct a new treatment facility on a greenfield site, with a key element being the development of a new long sea outfall discharge for treated effluent into Liscannor Bay from Cregg beach. In order to support the design, siting and environmental assessment of this discharge, a suite of marine environmental and geotechnical surveys must be undertaken in the bay. The MUL application is to secure permission for the site investigation surveys. The proposed activities include bathymetric and geophysical surveys, seabed sampling and benthic surveys, geotechnical investigations, archaeological survey and water quality sampling conducted over a xx to xx period. The area of the MUL is 287.4 ha (Area A – Liscannor Bay, Co Clare) and Area B – within the Inagh River – 6430.28m². The site investigation surveys are provisionally scheduled to take place from Q4 2026 to Q1 2027, to allow for any contingency, a duration of 24 months is being sought for this MUL.

IFI Comment

Given the state of our diadromous fish species IFI believe that all activities should aim to reduce any impact on these species. Sea and river lamprey, along with salmon are Habitat Directive Annex II species and are qualifying interest for a number of Natura 2000 sites along the West Coast. In particular they are listed as a QI in the Lower Shannon SAC (55.4 km from Area A). These species use the coastal waters, to migrate through and as a feeding area. The European Eel is critically endangered and is known to inhabit both freshwater, transitional and coastal waters.

In the SISAA no appropriate assessment screening was undertaken for any of the diadromous fish (sea lamprey, river lamprey and salmon) species listed as QIs in the adjacent SACs. IFI believes that these species should be screened in and considered in any mitigation measures. In the text there is no justification for not screening in diadromous fish. In the most recent Article 17 reporting of the Habitats Directive the overall status of sea lamprey and salmon as assessed as bad, river lamprey was assessed as inadequate. Given this information, it is recommended that screening for appropriate assessment be undertaken for these diadromous fish species.



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To reduce impact on fish species the use of soft-start and ramp-up procedures for any sound-generating works undertaken – both on a day-to-day basis and on re start after any stoppages within any day should be undertaken. This measure should be a condition of the foreshore licence. The comments of IFI in this regard relate to fish species of conservation significance and of leisure angling significance all of which constitute part of IFI's brief.

Ciara O'Leary and Nicola O'Gorman (IFI R&D)
26.03.2026

NPWS (2025). The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland. Volume 1: Summary Overview. Unpublished NPWS report. Edited by: Domhnall Finch, Aoife Delaney, Fionnuala O'Neill and Deirdre Lynn