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*Press Release 27th April 2012*

### Prison sentence for illegal salmon fishing in Dundalk

Inland Fisheries Ireland has successfully won a court case against Mr. John Carney, Beechwood Drive, Dunleer Co. Louth for illegal salmon fishing. He was given a four month prison sentence, fined €400 and ordered to pay total costs of €1,414 to Inland Fisheries Ireland in Drogheda District Court on 24th April last.

Mr. John Carney was found to be illegally fishing in September 2011. Fisheries officers from the Dundalk district apprehended him with fixed nets in the tidal section of the River Glyde. When questioned by officers on the night in question, the defendant was found to have set 5 nets, be in possession of illegally caught salmon and refused to give his name and address. Fisheries officers Thomas Duffy, Seamus Kelleedy, Paul O'Reilly and Assistant Inspector Ronan O'Brien were present and court proceedings were initiated.

Both sides were represented in court and Mr. Carney fought the charges being brought against him. Judge Hamill convicted Mr. Carney under Sections 96, 182 and 301 of the 1959 Fisheries Act, for using a fixed engine which was capable of taking salmon or sea trout, being in possession of illegally caught salmon and for refusing to give his name and address when lawfully demanded. He was given a four month prison sentence, fined €400 and ordered to pay total costs of €1,440 to Inland Fisheries Ireland. Mr. Carney has been fined and convicted for previous fisheries offences in the area over the last number of years the most recent being in 2010 when he was convicted for illegal salmon fishing.

The rivers in Dundalk remain vulnerable due to the decline of salmon stocks. In 2006 Inland Fisheries Ireland introduced a series of conservation measures in order to combat the decline in salmon numbers. The interceptory mixed stock fishery for salmon ceased throughout Ireland and netsmen who availed of the Hardship Scheme were duly compensated for their loss of the salmon fishery. At the peak of salmon production in the 1970's, approximately 3,000 salmon were caught commercially in Dundalk waters annually. This declined to an all time low in 2006 when only 225 were caught in the entire Dundalk bay area. Annagassan would have been a traditional location for poaching salmon and sea trout in the past

Consequently all the rivers on the East coast with the exception of the River Fane were closed for salmon fishing. The Dee, Glyde and Castletown rivers are open for catch and release only.

Inland Fisheries Ireland have a freefone number to enable members of the general public to report poaching and pollution incidences - 1890 34 74 24 or for easier recall 1890 FISH 24. This phone line is designed to encourage the reporting of incidences of illegal fishing, water pollution and invasive species.

It is hoped that these measures will preserve our stock of Atlantic salmon, which are not only a valuable resource for our economy, but also an important part of our natural heritage as salmon and trout have been running our rivers since the last ice age. Anglers also need to continue to be vigilant to report any illegal fishing incidences to the Board.

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#### Notes to Editor

**Inland Fisheries Ireland** is a statutory body operating under the aegis of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and was established under the Fisheries Act on 1st July 2010. Its principal function is the protection and conservation of the inland fisheries resource. IFI will promote, support, facilitate and advise the Minister on the conservation, protection, management, development and improvement of inland fisheries, including sea angling and develop and advise the Minister on policy and national strategies relating to inland fisheries and sea angling. Inland Fisheries Ireland replaces the Central and seven Regional Fisheries Boards.