

Ireland's



County Sligo and District Game Angling Guide



THE NORTH WESTERN
REGIONAL FISHERIES BOARD



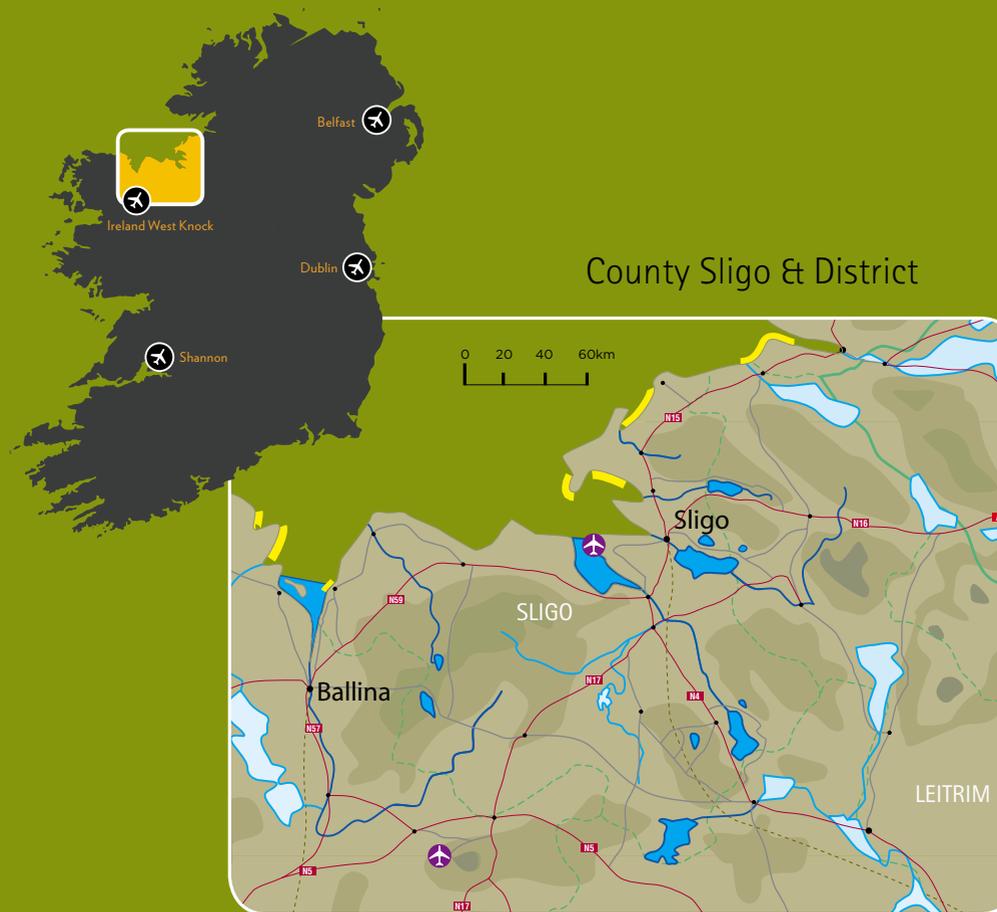
Introduction

Co. Sligo, and the wider Sligo District, possesses a wide variety of game fisheries, set in some of Ireland's most scenic locations. From the productive Ballysadare and Easkey salmon rivers to the quality wild brown trout fishing in Lough Arrow, this area has fisheries to please almost every game angler.

This guide covers the main game angling waters in the district. It contains information on the location of each fishery as well as details in relation to contacts, permitted angling methods, angling seasons etc. For up to date information on angling conditions and water levels, intending anglers should contact the Fisheries Board or the fishery owner.

In the west of the district, the River Moy rises in the Ox Mountains and flows to the sea on the Sligo/Mayo border. East of the Moy Estuary is the spatey Easkey River which is well known for salmon fishing. The Easkey River drains Easky Lough, a mountain lake, which contains only very small brown trout and the occasional sea trout. Also in the Ox Mountains, is the picturesque Lough Talt which contains a nice stock of brown trout which can weigh up to about .45 kg (1lb). Further east, the Ballysadare River boasts an impressive salmon run and annual rod catch of up to 1,027 salmon.

Close to Sligo town is Lough Gill, a popular spring salmon fishery which opens for fishing on New Year's Day. The inflowing Bonet River also gets a reasonable run of salmon later in the season. At the northern end of the district is Glencar Lough, a fine sea trout fishery, located in one of the most spectacular settings in Ireland. On the Sligo/Roscommon border, Lough Arrow's rich waters have a reputation for producing some top quality brown trout; this lough has traditionally been rated among the top brown trout lakes in the country while the outflowing Unshin River also holds some fine brown trout.



Regulations

General

Game angling regulations, especially in relation to salmon angling, can change from year to year and it is the responsibility of anglers to familiarise themselves with the laws and regulations governing each fishery before commencing angling. Anglers can get up to date information on fishing regulations by contacting the North Western Regional Fisheries Board or by visiting the Board's website www.northwestfisheries.ie.

Licences and Logbooks

Anglers engaged in fishing for salmon or sea trout must be in possession of a valid state salmon licence and must have it on their person at the time of fishing. Licences can be purchased from most tackle shops, the Fisheries Board or online at www.northwestfisheries.ie. An angler's logbook is issued with a licence as well as a number of gill tags and an angler must also be in possession of the logbook when fishing. Salmon, or sea trout over 40 cms., which are killed must be tagged immediately. Additional tagging requirements may apply in the case of some fisheries.

Permission/Permits

Where a fishery is privately owned, permission must be sought from the owner before commencing angling; this normally involves the purchase of an angling permit. Whether or not a permit is required, private property should be respected at all times and only recognised access points to a fishery should be used.

Catch-and-Release Fisheries

On some fisheries, angling may only be carried out on a "Catch and Release" basis, for all, or part of the angling season, in order to conserve stocks of salmon. Where a "Catch and Release" regulation applies, worm fishing is prohibited and only flies or spinners fitted with a single barbless hook may be used. This regulation also applies to anglers that have caught their daily/yearly bag limit of salmon and wish to continue fishing. In all such cases, fish should be played firmly and brought to the net as quickly as possible in order to avoid over tiring the fish; the fish should then be handled in a gentle manner and promptly returned to the water unharmed. Fish should be unhooked in the water where possible; if removed from the water, hands and unhooking mat should be wetted first. The use of a forceps will greatly assist in removing a hook and a landing net with a knotless mesh should be used.

Closed Fisheries

Some rivers or lakes may be completely closed for angling for salmon and sea trout over 40 cm. in order to protect salmon stocks that have fallen below a safe level. For an up to date list of open and closed rivers, please contact the Fisheries Board.

Conservation

All anglers are asked to consider "Catch and Release" even where this is not required by law. By carefully returning fish to the water, you will help ensure the future of the region's fish stocks. For proper "Catch and Release" technique, see the "Catch and Release" paragraph or consult the "Catch and Release" leaflet which is available from the Fisheries Board.



Bag Limits

At the time of publication of this guide, a seasonal bag limit of 10 salmon (any size) or sea trout (over 40 cm) applies for angling with daily bag limits also in force. As salmon regulations may change from year to year, anglers are advised to familiarise themselves with the current salmon angling regulations before they commence fishing. Up to date salmon and sea trout regulations are available on www.northwestfisheries.ie. A regional daily bag limit of 6 sea trout applies but salmon bag limits apply in case of sea trout over 40cm. Where a brown trout bag limit applies, details are provided in relation to each fishery concerned.

Invasive Species Prevention

Invasive species pose a huge threat to the fisheries of Ireland and to the environment. Anglers are urged to take measures to prevent the spread of unwanted plants and animals. The use of live fish as bait is strictly prohibited by law. Always thoroughly clean your boat, trailer, engine, angling equipment and waders when leaving a waterway.

Environment

Please protect the environment of the Sligo/Leitrim area by taking your litter home.

Safety

The law requires that persons venturing out on to lakes and coastal waters, in a boat less than 7m in length, wear a properly fitting, and approved, personal flotation device or a lifejacket. Anglers should also consider wearing a personal flotation device when fishing on large rivers, rivers in flood and in estuaries; it could save your life! The use of a wading stick is recommended when wading in larger or swollen rivers.

Accuracy

While every effort has been made to ensure that the information contained in this guide is accurate, no responsibility will be accepted by The North Western Regional Fisheries Board for any errors or inaccuracies contained therein.

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RIVER MOY

LOCATION

The River Moy rises on the eastern side of the Ox Mountains, in Co. Sligo. It flows in a south-westerly direction through the village of Banada, Co. Sligo, and past the town of Swinford, Co. Mayo. The Moy then changes course and flows in a northerly direction through the towns of Foxford and Ballina (the Salmon Capital of Ireland). The famous Moy then flows to the sea through an estuary which straddles the Mayo/Sligo border.

SPECIES & SEASON

Salmon:	1st February – 30th September (from the Ridge Pool upstream) 17th April – 30th September (downstream of the Ridge Pool)
Sea Trout:	15th February – 10th October
Brown Trout:	15th February – 10th October

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods, subject to individual fishery rules.

PERMISSION

Permit not generally required in the County Sligo part of the Moy, upstream of the Ballintemple Fishery, which ends at a point just downstream of Cloongullane Bridge, on the N26 road, but permission may be required from riparian land owners in order to access the river. From the Ballintemple Fishery to Ballina, permits are required for the various fisheries. While fishing rights on the estuary are owned by the Fisheries Board, an angling permit is not generally required there. A detailed guide to fisheries on the River Moy is available from the Fisheries Board.

COMMENTS

The River Moy, with a catchment area of 2084 km², is Ireland's most prolific game fishery, with an annual average rod catch of 8,717 salmon for the years 2004–2008. The main Moy channel is up to 40 metres wide and comprises a variety of private and association angling water to suit all angling tastes and budgets. The river's premier salmon angling stretch is, undoubtedly, the Moy Fishery at Ballina town. This stretch is generally "fly fishing only" on the prime beats which must generally be booked well in advance. The Moy gets a fantastic run of spring salmon that has been improving over the last number of years. The spring fishing is concentrated on the period March to May. The Moy is best known, however, for its very large grilse run. The grilse fishing starts in mid June and continues on right through until the season closes on 30th September.





MOY ESTUARY

LOCATION

Just North of Ballina town, on the Sligo/Mayo Border. The coast road from Ballina to Enniscrone, the R297, runs parallel to the estuary.

SPECIES & SEASON

Sea Trout: 17th April – 10th October

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods. The minimum size limit for sea trout is 25.4cm (10 inches).

PERMISSION

Not generally required.

COMMENTS

The Moy Estuary is famed for its large numbers of hard fighting sea trout. Most trout are caught on sandeel or mackerel strip but fly fishing has become increasingly popular and productive. Shore angling is popular but best results come when fishing from a boat with a guide. From the shore, the Castle and Rinroe are productive angling points .



EASKEY RIVER

LOCATION

The Easkey River rises in the Ox Mountains and enters the sea at Easky village.

SPECIES & SEASON

Salmon: 1st February – 30th September

Sea Trout: 1st February – 10th October

Brown Trout: 15th February – 12th October

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods allowed, subject to fishery rules

PERMISSION

Not generally required from Lough Easkey to a point about a mile downstream of the N59 Road bridge. Downstream of this point, is the private Fortland Fishery (www.anglingwestireland.com) for which a permit is required (Tel: +353 (0)86 8032350). A permit is not generally required from the bridge in Easkey village to the sea.

COMMENTS

The Easkey is primarily a spate salmon river (29 km. long) and gets a good run of grilse and summer salmon as well as sea trout. It fishes best from mid June until the end of the season.

EASKEY LOUGH

LOCATION

Ox Mountains, Co. Sligo, Approx. 15km south of Dromore West, off the N59 road.

SPECIES & SEASON

Sea Trout: 1st February – 12th October
Brown Trout: 15th February – 10th October

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods.

PERMISSION

Not generally required.

COMMENTS

No boat is available but there is plenty of shore fishing and the safest place to fish is along the road on the east side. The Lough holds a stock of small resident brown trout and occasionally, after high water, receives a run of sea trout.

LOUGH TALT

LOCATION

13 km. west of Tubbercurry town on the R294, Tubbercurry to Ballina Road

SPECIES & SEASON

Brown Trout: 15th February – 10th October

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods.

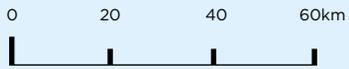
PERMISSION

Not generally required.

COMMENTS

Lough Talt can be fished from the northeast shore line which the R294 road runs along, making access easy. The trout in the lake rarely exceed .45 kg. (1 lb.) but are numerous and free rising.







BALLYSADARE RIVER

LOCATION

Ballysadare, Co. Sligo. The Ballysadare River is formed from the confluence of the Owenmore and Unshin rivers.

SPECIES & SEASON

Salmon: 1st February – 30th September
 Sea Trout: 1st February – 30th September
 Brown Trout: 15th February – 30th September

(While the statutory close season ends on 31 January, salmon angling may not be permitted by the fishery owners, Ballysadare Fishing Club Ltd., until later in the season and intending anglers should contact the club for up to date information.)

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods allowed subject to fishery rules

PERMISSION

Salmon angling on the Ballysadare Fishery must be pre-booked by contacting the Ballysadare Fishing Club (Tel: +353 (0)71 9130513). The Club owns the salmon and sea trout fishing rights on all rivers in the Ballysadare system and a permit is required to fish for these species on any river in the system.

COMMENTS

The Ballysadare Fishery contains a large waterfall with a fish pass to allow salmon and sea trout to migrate upstream. The section below the falls, known as the "Butt", consists of a number of tidal pools that produce the bulk of the salmon catch. When the tidal conditions are suitable, there is some nice fly water in these pools. Above the waterfall, is a series of small falls, pools and fast streamy "Fly" water that can also be quite productive.

BALLYSADARE ESTUARY

LOCATION

The Ballysadare Estuary extends in a north westerly direction for about 9.5 km from Ballysadare village towards the town of Strandhill

SPECIES & SEASON

Sea Trout: 15th February – 30th September

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods. The minimum size limit for Sea Trout is 25.4cm (10 inches).

PERMISSION

Permit not generally required.

COMMENTS

The Ballysadare Estuary can be accessed from a number of points such as Portavaud on the west shore, off the N59 Ballysadare to Ballina road, or by walking to the western end of Strandhill beach. Fly or bait fishing from the shore or a boat can produce good catches of sea trout.

UNSHIN RIVER

LOCATION

The Unshin River drains Lough Arrow and flows in a north-westerly direction from the lough until it joins the Owenmore River to become the Ballysadare River.

SPECIES & SEASON

Brown Trout: 15th February – 30th September

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods.

PERMISSION

Permit not generally required.

COMMENTS

This is a rich limestone river with deep weed beds and an abundant and varied invertebrate fauna. The river does not hold a very high density of trout but is home to some large, fine quality fish. It is best fished early in the season before the weed beds become too dense. A good hatch of fly life is important to bring fish on the feed and to the surface.

LOUGH ARROW

LOCATION

Lough Arrow is situated about twelve miles south-east of Ballisodare, along the N4, Sligo-Dublin, road

SPECIES & SEASON

Brown Trout: 1st April – 30th September

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods are permitted but certain restrictions apply to trolling. The minimum size limit is 30.48cm. (12 inches) and the daily bag limit is 4 brown trout.

PERMISSION

Permit not generally required.

ACCESS

There is public access at Brick Pier on the eastern shore, Ballinafad Pier on the southern shore and Rinnbawn Pier on the western shore.

COMMENTS

A detailed Angling Map and Guide to Lough Arrow is available from the Fisheries Board

LOUGH BO

LOCATION

Lough Bo is situated 4 km. north of Lough Arrow, south of the R284 road.

SPECIES & SEASON

Brown Trout: 15th March – 10th October

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods. The minimum size limit is 22.9cm. (9 inches) and the daily bag limit is 4 trout.

PERMISSION

A permit is required in order to fish Lough Bo and can be obtained from Mrs. Mary McDonagh (Tel: +353 (0)71 9165126).

COMMENTS

Lough Bo is managed by The North Western Regional Fisheries Board. It is stocked annually with brown trout that provide lively sport. Access is good from the road running along the north-western side of the lake.



LOUGH NA LEIBE (LABE)

LOCATION

Lough na Leibe (Labe) is situated in a scenic location and is signposted from the Ballymote – Castlebaldwin road.

SPECIES & SEASON

Rainbow Trout: 1st March – 30th September

METHODS & REGULATIONS

Fly only. The minimum size limit is 25.4cm. (10 inches) and the daily bag limit is 4 trout.

PERMISSION

Hayden's Bar, Ballymote, (+353 (0)71 9183188).

COMMENTS

Stocked annually with rainbow trout, this lake provides some entertaining fishing as a small number of fish over-winter.

LOUGH GARA

LOCATION

Located in the south-eastern corner of Co. Sligo, and west of Boyle, Co. Roscommon, Lough Gara is part of the vast River Shannon system.

SPECIES & SEASON

Brown Trout: 1st March – 30th September

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods.

PERMISSION

Not generally required.

COMMENTS

Lough Gara is a large lake with a small stock of brown trout between .45 and .9 kg. (1 and 2 lbs.). Trout fishing is confined to the main fly hatches during the year with the Mayfly fishing being the most productive. For more information on Lough Gara, contact the Shannon Regional Fisheries Board on (Tel: +353 (0)61 300238) or info@shannon-fishery-board.ie.

GARAVOGUE RIVER

LOCATION

The Garavogue is a very short river which flows from Lough Gill, through Sligo town, to the sea.

SPECIES & SEASON

Salmon: 1st January (1st February below the "Lodge") – 30th September

Sea Trout: 1st January – 30th September

Brown Trout: 15th February – 30th September

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All Legal methods.

PERMISSION

Permit not generally required.

COMMENTS

The Garavogue is a short river, slightly over 2 km. long. It is predominantly fished on the east side of Sligo town close to where it flows out of Lough Gill. The river gets a good run of spring fish, as well as a run of grilse.

LOUGH GILL

LOCATION

3 km, West of Sligo town.

SPECIES & SEASON

Salmon: 1st January – 30th September.

Sea Trout: 1st January – 30th September.

Brown Trout: 15th February – 30th September

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods.

PERMISSION

Not generally required.

COMMENTS

Lough Gill is predominantly known as a salmon fishery. Trolling with Flying Cs and Spoons early in the year (January to May) is the main form of game fishing on this lough. Gill holds a stock of trout but they are noted for being slow to rise. Most of the trout angling is concentrated around the Mayfly hatches.



BONET RIVER

LOCATION

The Bonet River rises north of Manorhamilton, Co. Leitrim, at Glenade Lake. It flows south, past Manorhamilton, and then turns in a westerly direction, past Dromahair, and into the eastern end of Lough Gill.

SPECIES & SEASON

Salmon:	1st February – 30th September
Sea Trout:	1st February – 30th September
Brown Trout:	15th February – 30th September

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods.

PERMISSION

The Bonet River has a number of privately owned fisheries and syndicate waters. Contacts for permission are the Dromahair Anglers Association (Tel: +353 (0)71 9164118) and Breffni Holiday Cottages, Dromahair, (Tel: +353 (0)71 9164103). For further information on permits contact the Fisheries Board.

COMMENTS

The Bonet River is a good spring salmon and grilse fishery. Fishing is dependent on water levels.

LOUGH DOON

LOCATION

Lough Doon is 12 km. west of Sligo town.

SPECIES & SEASON

Brown Trout:	1st March – 30th September
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METHODS & REGULATIONS

Fly only. Anglers under the age of 14 can use bubble and fly when fishing from the shore. The minimum size limit is 25.4cm. (10 inches) and the daily bag limit is 3 trout.

PERMISSION

For information on permits, contact the Fisheries Board.

COMMENTS

Lough Doon is a rich hill lough that holds a good stock of brown trout over 25.4 cm. (10 inches) with some up to 35cms (13.7inches). The fish are free rising and large catches of trout by experienced anglers are not uncommon. It is an ideal location for young anglers and those new to the sport.

COLGAGH LOUGH

LOCATION

5 km. west of Sligo Town, off the R786, Sligo - Dromahair road.

SPECIES & SEASON

Brown Trout: 15th February – 30th September

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods.

PERMISSION

Not generally required but public access to this lake is limited and permission of the relevant land owner should be sought where appropriate.

COMMENTS

Colgagh Lough holds a good stock of brown trout and has, on occasion, produced trout up to 2.27 kg. (5 lbs.). It is best fished early in the year.

DRUMCLIFF RIVER

LOCATION

This river drains beautiful Glencar Lough and crosses the main Sligo-Donnegal N15 road 8 km. north of Sligo town.

SPECIES & SEASON

Salmon: 1st February – 30th September

Sea Trout: 1st February. – 12th October

Brown Trout: 15th February. – 12th October

METHODS & REGULATIONS

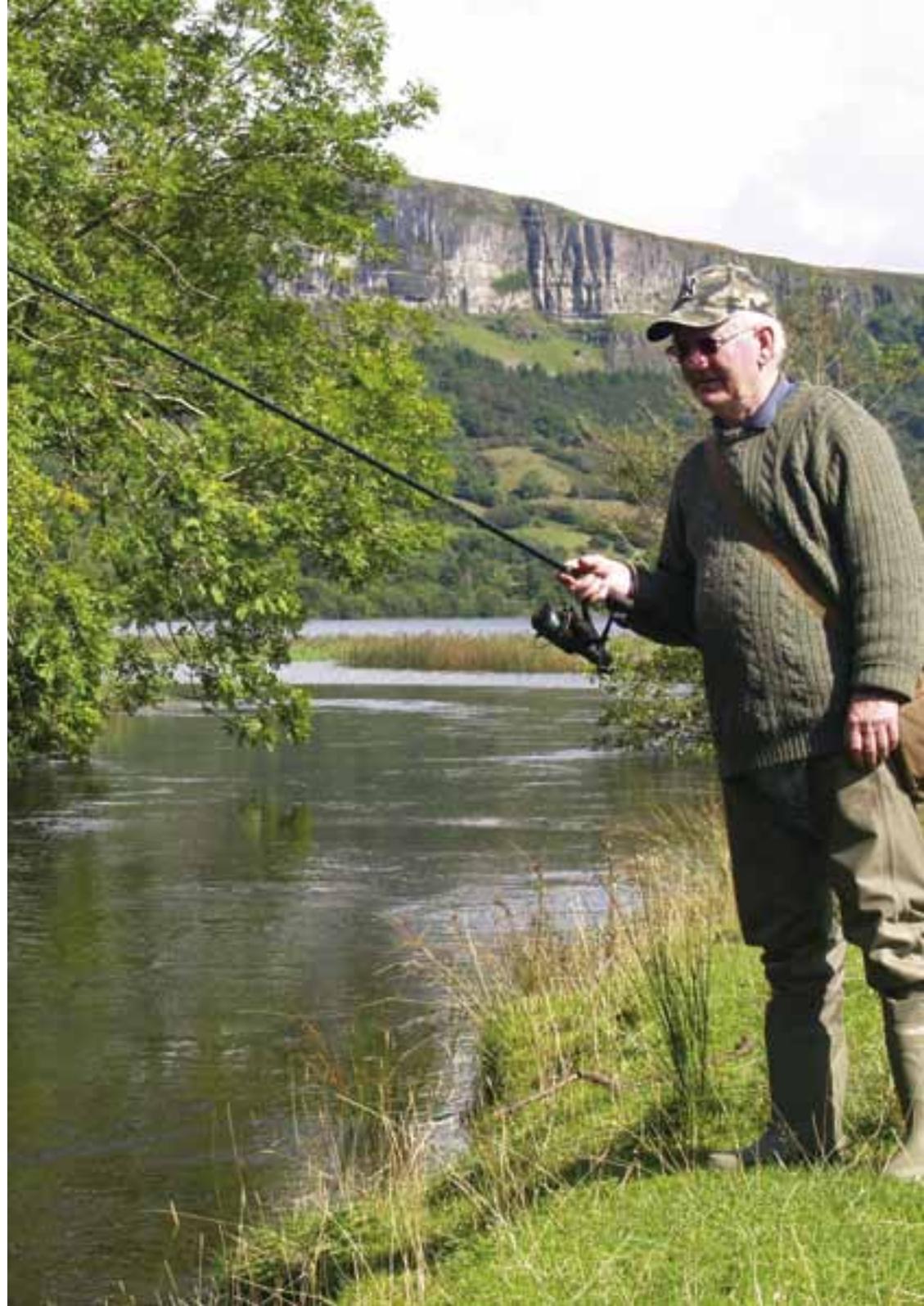
All legal methods upstream of the N15 road bridge. From this bridge to the sea, a "fly only" regulation applies.

PERMISSION

For information on permits, contact Sligo Anglers Association (Tel: +353 (0) 71 9168404).

COMMENTS

The "Fly Pools", downstream of the bridge on the N15, can hold good numbers of sea trout in the summer. From this bridge to Glencar Lough, the water is suitable in places for fly fishing.



GLENCAR LOUGH

LOCATION

This lough is set in a beautiful location about 11 km. north-east of Sligo town, below the picturesque Glencar Waterfall.

SPECIES & SEASON

Salmon: 1st February – 30th September
Sea Trout: 1st February – 12th October
Brown Trout: 15th February – 12th October

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods.

PERMISSION

The fishing is controlled by the Sligo Anglers Association (Tel: +353 (0)71 9168404). For permits contact Barton Smith, Sligo (Tel: +353 (0) 71 9142356) or Mrs Sibbery, The Waterfall, Glencar, Co. Leitrim (Tel: +353 (0) 71 9144221).

COMMENTS

Glencar Lough is situated in a very picturesque location. The lough has a resident stock of small brown trout and gets a good run of sea trout and a fair number of salmon, both spring fish and grilse. The average size of the sea trout is over 0.7kg (1.5lbs.). The best trout taken in recent years weighed 2.95 kg. (6½ lb.) and the best salmon was 9.98 kg. (22 lb.).

GRANGE RIVER

LOCATION

This small river is situated at the northern end of County Sligo and is crossed by the N15 Sligo–Donegal road.

SPECIES & SEASON

Salmon: 1st February – 30th September
Sea Trout: 1st February – 30th September
Brown Trout: 15th February – 30th September

METHODS & REGULATIONS

All legal methods.

PERMISSION

Generally not required but, at the time of publication of this guide, the Grange River was closed for angling for salmon and for sea trout over 40cm., in order to conserve depleted stocks. For up to date information please contact the North Western Regional Fisheries Board.

COMMENTS

The Grange River traditionally received a run of sea trout and some grilse. Fishing was mainly confined to the lower sections of the river from the village of Grange to the sea including the estuary.





Tackle Shops

Barton Smith
Hyde Bridge, Sligo.
Tel: +353 (0)71 9142356
Fax: + 353 (0)71 9144196

Doherty's House of Value
Wine St, Sligo.
Tel: +353 (0)71 9171900

Kingfisher Baits
Pier Road, Enniscrone, Co. Sligo.
Tel: +353 (0)96 36733

S G Gilmore
General Merchants, Main Street, Dromahair, Co. Leitrim.
Tel: +353 (0)71 9164118

Further Information

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