

**Environment Marine & Fisheries
Group**
Marine & Fisheries Division



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

An Roinn
**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Department o'
**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Our reference: **DAERA/26-228**



Marine & Fisheries Division

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14 April 2026

Dear ,

Environmental Information Regulations 2004 – Recreational Angling on Lough Neagh

I refer to your request for information received by the Department on 30 March 2026. I can advise that the Department has completed its search and can confirm that it holds some of the information you requested and where possible the information has been provided, see below.

You had sought

1. **Have the Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-Operative Society any private water bailiffs currently registered with DAERA/NI Courts.**

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2. **What powers have such Private Water Bailiffs been granted by DAERA and NI Courts with regard to recreational anglers fly fishing, catch and release, on Lough Neagh.**
3. **Did the Fishermen's Co-Operative Society provide proof of their rights to recreational angling/fly fishing on Lough Neagh. If yes I would request a copy of the documentation provided by Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-Operative Society as proof of their rights to recreational angling on Lough Neagh.**
4. **Does a DAERA rod license entitle recreational fly fishing anglers to fish, catch and release, on Lough Neagh**

Responses

Question 1

Yes Lough Neagh Fishermen's Co-Operative Society do have private water bailiffs currently registered with DAERA / NI Courts

Question 2

General powers for "an authorised person" are given under Section 172 of the Fisheries Act (NI) 1996. Those powers are as follows:

Private Water Bailiff (PWB)'s does not have the powers to enter or cross private lands without consent unless for the purpose of preventing or detecting the commission of an offence. PWB's also to ensure their warrant is valid for the time of any detections take place.

172 General powers of authorised persons. N. Ireland

(1) An authorised person may, for the purposes of the protection of the fisheries, at any time—

- (a) enter and pass through or along [or remain on] the banks or borders of any lakes or rivers or of the tributaries thereof.
- (b) with boats or otherwise, enter upon any such lakes or rivers.
- (c) enter upon and examine all weirs, sluices, mill dams, fish passes, mill races and watercourses communicating with such lakes or rivers, and pass along the same.
- (d) stop, enter and search any boat which has been or is engaged or is about to engage in fishing.
- (e) examine all standing, floating or other nets whatsoever.
- (f) examine all fish and all fishing engines found in any place which by this Act he is authorised to enter, and for that purpose open any package found in such place and containing or suspected of containing any fish or fishing engine.

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- (g) seize any unlawful fishing engine or any lawful fishing engine which is being unlawfully used.
- (h) seize any fish in the possession of a person found or suspected of committing an offence under any statutory provision relating to fisheries or any fish which have been or are suspected of having been unlawfully captured.
- (i) seize any other thing whatsoever by means of, or in relation to, which an offence under any provision of this Act has been or is suspected of having been committed.
- (j) do all such other acts and things as he is authorised to do under this Act.

- To Note “suspected” means suspected on reasonable grounds”
- Nothing in this section shall be construed as authorising any person to enter any enclosed garden or any dwelling house or the curtilages thereof except where the ordinary road or passage to any weir, dam, or dyke traverses such garden or curtilage.”

Question 3

The Lough Neagh Fishermen’s Co-Operative Society have submitted evidence of their rights to manage recreational angling/fly fishing on Lough Neagh to DAERA..

The Department has decided not to release a copy of the documentation provided by Lough Neagh Fishermen’s Co-Operative Society as proof of their rights to recreational angling on Lough Neagh, under Regulation 12 (5) (b) the course of justice and inquiries exception. The Department is aware of impending High Court proceedings on the issue of ownership of the fishing rights regarding scale and coarse fish on Lough Neagh. A Public Interest Test attached under Annex 1 supports this decision.

Question 4

A DAERA rod licence (Season / Juvenile / Concessionary) is a legal requirement under the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966 for all anglers aged 12 and over regardless of where they fish in the DAERA jurisdiction.

Section 40 of the 1966 Fisheries Act states that “A fishing licence shall operate in accordance with the terms of the [\[F9 regulations\]](#) under which it is issued and of the licence but shall not be construed—

- (a) as conferring on any person using any fishing engine any right of fishing in any place, being a right which he does not otherwise possess; or
- (b) as affecting the rights of any person other than the licence-holder or, in the case of a licence to which section 39 does not apply, the person using the fishing engine; or
- (c) as making legal any fishing engine that would otherwise be illegal, or as implying any recognition of the legality of any fishing engine; or

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- (d) as rendering lawful anything which is unlawful by virtue of any enactment other than this Part.

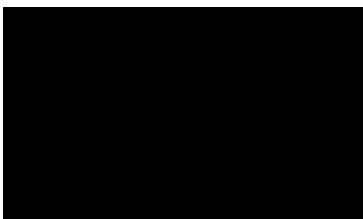
All anglers must have the fishery owner's permission to fish in the form of a permit or day ticket, and this applies to recreational angling on Lough Neagh.

If you require any clarification, believe that any part of your request has been overlooked, misunderstood or misinterpreted, please contact me in the first instance to see if it is a matter that can be resolved.

If you are unhappy with the manner in which your request for information has been handled or the decision to release/withhold information, you have the right to request a formal review by the Department. If you wish to do so, please contact The Review Section either by e-mailing daera.informationmanager@daera-ni.gov.uk or by post at The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Data Protection & Information Management Branch, Floor 2, Jubilee House, 111 Ballykelly Road, Ballykelly, Limavady BT49 9HP, within two months from the date of this letter.

If after such an internal review you are still unhappy with the response, you have the right to appeal to the Information Commissioner at Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, CHESHIRE SK9 5AF, who will undertake an independent review of the Department's decision.

Yours sincerely,



DAERA Inland Fisheries

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