



HOUSE OF COMMONS

Tuesday 31st January 2012

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Our Ref: CAL/C/R/2/12

Minister Carál Ní Chuilín
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast
BT2 7EG

Dear 

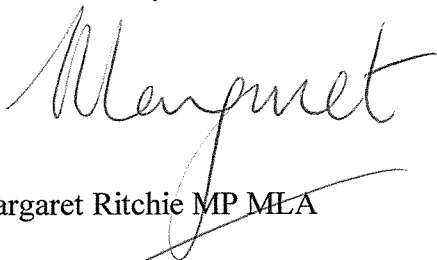
RE: Angling in the Quoile River

It has been brought to my attention by a local Angling group that fish stocks are being depleted by six seals that have access the Quoile River.

I am writing to request that immediate action be taken by the Department to ascertain how fish stocks can be sustained to a level that will allow for angling, while ensuring the protection of the seals.

I look forward to your reply

Yours sincerely



Margaret Ritchie MP MLA

Constituency Office, 32 Saul Street, Downpatrick, Co Down BT30 6NQ
Telephone: (028 44) 612882 Fax: (028 44) 619574 e-mail: m.ritchie@sdlp.ie
Web Page: www.margaretritchie.com

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 facebook



FROM: [REDACTED]
Inland Fisheries Group

DATE: 9 February 2012

TO: [REDACTED]
3. Caral Ni Chuilín MLA

cc list below

**COR/57/2012: LETTER FROM MARGARET RITCHIE MP, REGARDING
SEALS IN THE QUOILE RIVER AND THE IMPACT ON FISH STOCKS.**

SUMMARY

Issue Margaret Ritchie MP, has written to you in response to correspondence she has received from a local angling group concerning seals in the Quoile River and the impact these are having on fish stocks in the river.

Timescale: Routine

FOI Implications: None at present

Presentational Issues: None at present

Legislative implications: None.

Recommendation: That you issue the attached response to Margaret Ritchie MP.

DETAIL

Margaret Ritchie MP has written to you in response to correspondence she has received from a local angling club concerning seals in the Quoile River and the impact these seals are having on fish stocks. She has asked what action DCAL is considering to sustain fish stocks while at the same time ensuring the protection of the seals.

2. The Department is aware that a number of seals are currently in the Quoile River. Seals are protected under the Wildlife Order and the Quoile area is a designated Nature Reserve.

3. DCAL has requested Rivers Agency to carry out additional work at the Quoile Barrier to reduce the possibility of seals getting past and into the river system. DCAL Inland Fisheries Group staff will be discussing with colleagues in NIEA. DCAL staff will also undertake inspections of fences at the waters edge at Hare Island to prevent seals from accessing the river by travelling over land.

4. On a previous occasion when a seal accessed the Quoile River, an application by DCAL to EHS/NIEA to remove the seal from the Quoile was not approved by NIEA.

5. A number of anglers have submitted e-mails through the DCAL Angling website complaining about the seals, their impact on fish stocks in the river and commenting on the price of a licence and permit to fish the Quoile River when the fishing is so poor.

RECOMMENDATION

6. That you issue the attached response to Margaret Ritchie MP.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DCAL Press Office

Your Ref: CAL/C/R/2/12
Our Ref: COR/57/2012

February 2012

Margaret Ritchie MP
Constituency Office
32 Saul Street
Downpatrick
Co Down
BT30 6NQ

A chara Margaret

Thank you for your letter dated 31 January 2012 regarding seals in the Quoile River.

My Department is aware that a number of seals have recently been in the Quoile River and that this is having an impact on fish stocks in the Quoile River system.

Officials within my Departments Inland Fisheries team have been in contact with colleagues in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) as seals are a protected species under the Wildlife Order and the Quoile area is a designated Nature Reserve managed by the NIEA.

They have also requested the Rivers Agency, as owner of the Quoile Barrier, to undertake a survey and where necessary carry out additional work in an attempt to reduce the possibility of seals getting past the barrier and into the river system in future.

I can confirm that my officials will continue to keep this matter under review and take whatever steps are possible to protect fish stocks in the river.

Is mise le meas,

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure

FROM:

[REDACTED]

DATE: 01 March 2012

TO:

[REDACTED]

3. Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

See distribution list

AQW 9060/11-15: To ask the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, (i) what action her Department has taken to repair the fish pass at the Quoile Barrier on the Quoile River; (ii) to outline any future action her Department intends to take on this matter; and (iii) what action the Department will take to safely remove the seals which have entered the Quoile River as a result of damage to the fish pass and are depleting the river's fish stocks.

Please see attached answer to AQW 9060/11-15 and background note.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DCAL Press Office

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

**Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast BT2 7EG**

**Steven Agnew MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont**

**15 March 2012
AQW 9060/11-15**

Mr Agnew has asked:

The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, (i) what action her Department has taken to repair the fish pass at the Quoile Barrier on the Quoile River; (ii) to outline any future action her Department intends to take on this matter; and (iii) what action the Department will take to safely remove the seals which have entered the Quoile River as a result of damage to the fish pass and are depleting the river's fish stocks.

(AQW 9060/11-15)

ANSWER:

- (i) DCAL officials have requested the Rivers Agency, as owner of the Quoile Barrier, to undertake a survey and if necessary carry out remedial work.**
- (ii) DCAL Inland Fisheries staff will continue to liaise with the Rivers Agency and will keep this matter under regular review.**

- (iii) Seals are protected species under the Wildlife Order and the Quoile area is a designated Nature Reserve managed by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA). DCAL can take no action in relation to seals without the approval of NIEA and the Department does not have the specialist knowledge and equipment to safely remove the seals.

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Background:

- Recently this has been an ongoing issue where seals have been able to enter the Quoile River system upstream of the Quoile barrier, which is in place to prevent flooding at high tide in the nearby town of Downpatrick.
- The Quoile River is an excellent Public Angling Estate coarse fishery with some fine specimens of pike. The presence of the seals has resulted in anglers, local councillors and MLA's contacting the Department claiming that fish stocks are being badly affected..
- Inland Fisheries Group staff has been in contact with the Rivers Agency as owners of the barrier. The Agency has been asked to undertake a survey and carry out any necessary repairs that will prevent the seals from entering the river system, while still allowing access for salmon and sea trout.
- DCAL staff have also carried out a visual inspection of fences on land around the barrier as seals could possibly get around the barrier by going overland.
- DCAL Inland Fisheries Group staff are working with colleagues in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) as seals are a protected species under the Wildlife Order and the Quoile area is a designated Nature Reserve managed by the NIEA. The removal of the seals is best handled by NIEA which has the specialist knowledge and equipment to deal with this issue.

FROM:

[REDACTED]

DATE: 08 March 2012

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

3. Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

See distribution list

AQW 9402/11-15: To ask the Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 9060/11-15, what communication her Department has had with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in relation to the safe removal of seals from the Quoile River; and whether her Department has any plans to collaborate with the NIEA and to seek the expertise and equipment to safely remove the seals.

Please see attached answer to AQW 9402/11-15 and background note.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DEPARTMENT OF CULTURE, ARTS AND LEISURE

**Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure
Causeway Exchange
1-7 Bedford Street
Belfast BT2 7EG**

**Steven Agnew MLA
Northern Ireland Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Ballymiscaw
Stormont**

**23 March 2012
AQW 9402/11-15**

Mr Agnew has asked:

**The Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure, pursuant to AQW 9060/11-15, what communication her Department has had with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) in relation to the safe removal of seals from the Quoile River; and whether her Department has any plans to collaborate with the NIEA and to seek the expertise and equipment to safely remove the seals.
(AQW 9402/11-15)**

ANSWER:

It is the responsibility of both Rivers Agency as owners of the barrier to repair any damage which might allow seals access to the Quoile River and the NIEA which manages the Quoile Nature Reserve to remove seals from the Quoile River.

DCAL officials have met with representatives of both Agencies and advised them of the Departments concerns about the presence of seals in the Quoile River. The Rivers Agency has been asked to undertake a

survey of the barrier and carry out any necessary repairs. The NIEA has been asked for advice and DCAL will be guided by that.

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

Background:

- Recently there has been an ongoing issue where seals have been able to enter the Quoile River system upstream of the Quoile barrier, which is in place to prevent flooding at high tide in the nearby town of Downpatrick.
- Inland Fisheries Group staff have met with the Rivers Agency staff as owners of the barrier. The Agency has been asked to undertake a survey and carry out any necessary repairs that will prevent the seals from entering the river system, while still allowing access for salmon and sea trout.
- DCAL Inland Fisheries Group staff have also met with colleagues in the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) as seals are a protected species under the Wildlife Order and the Quoile area is a designated Nature Reserve managed by the NIEA.
- The removal of the seals is best handled by NIEA which has the specialist knowledge and equipment to deal with this issue, DCAL will provide assistance if required.

FROM: [REDACTED]
Inland Fisheries Group

DATE: 14 March 2012

TO: [REDACTED]
3. Caral Ni Chuilín MLA

cc list below

**COR/119/2012: FURTHER LETTER FROM MARGARET RITCHIE MP,
REGARDING SEALS IN THE QUOILE RIVER SEEKING DETAILS WHEN
EXPECTED REPAIR WORKS TO THE BARRIER WILL BE COMPLETED.**

SUMMARY

Issue Margaret Ritchie MP, has written to you in response to the Departments response to her original letter COR 57 2012 seeking a precise timeline of when works will be carried out on the barrier on the Quoile River to prevent seals from entering the Quoile river system.

Timescale: Routine

FOI Implications: None at present

Presentational Issues: None at present

Legislative implications: None.

Recommendation: That you issue the attached response to Margaret Ritchie MP.

DETAIL

Margaret Ritchie MP, has written to you in response to the Departments response to her original letter COR 57 2012 seeking a precise timeline of when works will be carried out on the barrier on the Quoile River to prevent seals from entering the Quoile river system.

2. The Department is working with both the Rivers Agency and the NIEA in an effort to resolve this issue. The Rivers Agency is under the remit of DARD and the NIEA under the remit of DOE. DCAL is not the lead Department regarding this issue and is unable to provide a precise timescale as requested by Margaret Ritchie MP.

RECOMMENDATION

3. That you issue the attached response to Margaret Ritchie MP.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Your Ref: CAL/C/R/4/12
Our Ref: COR/119/2012

21 March 2012

Margaret Ritchie MP
Constituency Office
32 Saul Street
Downpatrick
Co Down
BT30 6NQ

A chara

I refer to your letter dated 9th March 2012 requesting a precise timescale when works will be completed which will prevent seals from entering the Quoile River.

The Department is unable to provide a precise timescale when works will be undertaken and completed, as it is the responsibility of both Rivers Agency under the remit of DARD as owners of the barrier to repair any damage which might allow seals access to the Quoile River and the NIEA under the remit of DOE which manages the Quoile Nature Reserve to remove seals from the Quoile River.

DCAL officials have met with representatives of both Agencies and advised them of the Departments concerns about the presence of seals in the Quoile River. The Rivers Agency has been asked to undertake a survey of the barrier and carry out any necessary repairs. The NIEA has been asked for advice and DCAL will be guided by that.

Is mise le meas,

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure

FROM:

[REDACTED]

DATE: 23 April 2013

TO:

[REDACTED]

3. Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

cc list below

**COR/110/2013: LETTER FROM MARGARET RITCHIE MP, REGARDING
RESTOCKING OF QUOILE RIVER AS A RESULT OF RECENT SEAL
ATTACKS.**

SUMMARY

Issue Margaret Ritchie MP has written to you requesting that the Department restock the Quoile River as fish stocks have been depleted due to predation by seals which entered the river.

Timescale: Routine

FOI Implications: None at present

Presentational Issues: None at present

Legislative implications: None.

Recommendation: That you issue the attached response to Margaret Ritchie MP.

DETAIL

Margaret Ritchie MP, has written to you requesting that the Department restock the Quoile River as fish stocks have been depleted due to predation seals which entered the river.

2. Margaret Ritchie has previously written to you on the issue of seal accessing the Quoile River (COR/57/2012) and the impact these seals have on fish stocks.

3. The Quoile River is a Public Angling Estate coarse fishery. The Department does not normally stock coarse fisheries as the majority of coarse anglers release all fish caught back to the water.

4. There are issues regarding the movement of wild fish from one location to another as there is a risk of introducing and spreading fish borne bacteria. These fish may also impact on the generic strain of the existing fish within that location.

5. Wild fish stocks will recover naturally over a short time and the Department does not consider it necessary at this time to restock.

RECOMMENDATION

8. That you issue the attached response to Margaret Ritchie MP.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DCAL Press Office

Your Ref: CAL/C/L/2/13
Our Ref: COR/110/2013

April 2013

Margaret Ritchie MP
Constituency Office
32 Saul Street
Downpatrick
Co Down
BT30 6NQ

Margaret a chara,

Thank you for your letter dated 8th April 2013 requesting that my Department consider restocking the Quoile River due to recent issues regarding seals accessing the barrier into the river.

My Department does not normally stock coarse fisheries as the majority of coarse anglers release all fish caught back to the water.

My Department also has to consider issues regarding the movement of wild fish from one location to another as there is a risk of introducing and spreading fish borne bacteria. These fish may also impact on the generic strain of the existing fish within that location.

Wild fish stocks will recover naturally over a short time and my Department does not consider it necessary to restock at this time.

Is mise le meas,

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure

FROM: [REDACTED]
Inland Fisheries Group

DATE: 21 May 2013

TO: [REDACTED]

cc list below

COR/148/2013: E-MAIL FROM CHRIS HAZZARD MLA, SEEKING A FOLLOW UP MEETING TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES OF A SEALS PRESENT IN THE QUOILE RIVER.

SUMMARY

Issue

Chris Hazzard MLA has e-mailed you regarding the attendance of a DCAL representative at a follow up meeting to discuss the issue of a seal present in the Quoile River Downpatrick. The meeting has been scheduled for Monday 10 June at 1.45pm in Parliament Buildings.

Timescale: Routine

FOI Implications: None at present

Presentational Issues: None at present

Legislative implications: None.

Recommendation: That you issue the attached response to Chris Hazzard MLA.

DETAIL

Chris Hazzard MLA, has submitted an e-mailed to you requesting a DCAL Official attend a follow up meeting to discuss the issue of a seal present in the Quoile River Downpatrick. The meeting has been scheduled for Monday 10 June at 1.45pm in Parliament Buildings.

2. Chris Hazzard has previously written to you on the issue of seals accessing the Quoile River (COR/310/2012 and AQW 13447/11-15) and the impact these had on fish stocks.

3. The initial meeting regarding this issue was on 3 December 2012 and was attended by Michelle O'Neill MLA, DARD Minister, Chris Hazzard MLA and local anglers. DCAL Inland Fisheries Group was represented by [REDACTED] Senior Fisheries Officer South West area and [REDACTED], Rivers Agency and [REDACTED], NIEA were also in attendance.

4. Since that initial meeting Rivers Agency has modified the flood gate at the Quoile Barrier to restrict seals from entering the river and it was agreed that after a monitoring period, a follow up meeting would take place. There are reports from local anglers that there is still a lone seal in the river.

5. [REDACTED] has been monitoring the situation and is available to attend this meeting.

RECOMMENDATION

6. That you issue the attached response to Chris Hazzard MLA.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DCAL Press Office

Our Ref: COR/148/2013

May 2013

Chris Hazzard MLA
South Down Sinn Féin
2 Circular Road
Castlewellan
BT319ED

Chris a chara,

Thank you for your e-mail dated 16 May 2013 requesting a DCAL Official attend a follow up meeting to discuss the issue of a seal still present in the Quoile River Downpatrick.

Mr Peter Lynch, DCAL Senior Fisheries Officer responsible for the Downpatrick area who attended the initial meeting has confirmed his availability to attend the follow up meeting on Monday 10 June at 1.45pm in Parliament Buildings.

Is mise le meas,

Carál Ní Chuilín MLA
Minister of Culture, Arts and Leisure

NAME OF OFFICIAL [REDACTED]
BRANCH INLAND FISHERIES

DATE 2 JULY 2016

MICHELLE MCILVEEN MLA

COR/1075/2016 – MARGARET RITCHIE MP – RESTOCKING THE QUOILE & PROTECTION MEASURES

SUMMARY

MARGARET RITCHIE MP HAS SUBMITTED AN E-MAIL TO THE DEPARTMENT SEEKING A RESTOCKING OF THE QUOILE RIVER AND THE INTRODUCTION OF MEASURES TO PROTECT FISH STOCKS AGAINST PREDATION BY SEALS.

Issue: Margaret Ritchie MP has written previously to DCAL on a number of occasions regarding the impact of predation by seals on fish stocks in the Quoile River.

Timing: Routine

Equality Implications:

FOI Implications: This note is fully disclosable.

Special Adviser's Views:

Presentational Issues: Unlikely to generate media coverage unless Ms Ritchie chooses to highlight the issue. In this event the press office will manage any response from DAERA as required.

Recommendation: Please see attached draft letter for signature by Minister based on briefing

BACKGROUND

Margaret Ritchie MP had previously written to DCAL on a number of occasions regarding the impact of predation by seals on fish stocks in the Quoile River. The Quoile River is a Public Angling Estate coarse fishery and the Department has been aware of the occasional presence of seals in the river over the past few years. Seals are protected under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1995 (as amended) making it an offence to kill seals. The Wildlife Order provides further protection and makes it an offence to injure, disturb, transport and trade seals. The common seal is also a designated feature of Strangford Lough Special Area of Conservation and the Quoile area is a designated Nature Reserve, under the remit of the NIEA.

2. The Quoile Barrier is primarily a flood control measure to protect the town of Downpatrick from flooding and falls under the responsibility of Rivers Agency. They have inspected the barrier and some works were carried out in an attempt to try to prevent seals from accessing the river. However migratory fish also require access to and from the sea and there have been reports that seals can still access the river to feed. It should be noted that if the barrier was not present seals would have natural unhindered access to the Quoile River for feeding as they do on many other coastal rivers.
3. There have been no recent reports to DAERA Inland Fisheries through the NI Direct Angling website or by telephone about the presence of seals in the Quoile River or their impact on fish stocks or fishing in the river.
4. The Senior Fisheries Officer for the South East Area, [REDACTED], is familiar with this site and recently attended a meeting with Margaret Ritchie on this issue, which was arranged while Inland Fisheries was part of the former Department, DCAL. The meeting with took place on 31 May 2016 at her office in Downpatrick. Those attending the meeting were Margaret Ritchie MP, [REDACTED] (a local angler), [REDACTED] DAERA Marine Conservation and Reporting and [REDACTED], DAERA Inland Fisheries.
5. At the meeting Inland Fisheries were asked to consider stocking the Quoile with coarse fish such as bream and tench. Inland Fisheries on occasions remove coarse fish from game fisheries and will consider relocating these to the River Quoile where possible in future. Inland Fisheries could also consider sourcing fish from Lough Neagh commercial fishermen, but this would be at a cost to the Department and there is no budget in place to stock wild fisheries. These options could however also have a more negative affect by providing more food for seals to eat. Margaret Ritchie MP stated that she would contact Department of Infrastructure, Minister, Chris Hazzard to request works to the flood barrier that will help prevent seals from entering the Quoile River.

RECOMMENDATION

6. Please see attached draft letter **Annex B** for signature by Minister based on briefing

[REDACTED]

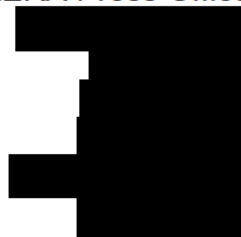
ATTACHMENTS

Annex A – Original e-mail from Margaret Ritchie MP

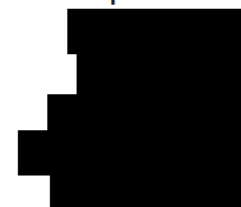
Annex B – Draft Response for Minister's signature

CC list:

DAERA Press Office



DAERA – IFG Internal Correspondance



Annex A

From: RITCHIE, Margaret <margaret.ritchie.mp@parliament.uk>

Sent: Friday, 24 June 2016 14:51

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Restocking the Quoile & protection measures

Mr [REDACTED]

Further to our meeting regarding the Quoile, I am writing to ascertain what plans the Department has for the restocking of the Quoile River, and if any further consideration has been given to the protection of fish stocks in the Quoile.

I trust that this is in order and I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Ritchie MP

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Annex B



Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Your Ref:
Our Ref: COR/1075/2016

July 2016

margaret.ritchie.mp@parliament.uk

Ms Margaret Ritchie MP

DAERA Inland Fisheries
Causeway Exchange
1 – 7 Bedford Street
BELFAST
BT2 7EG

Dear Ms Ritchie,

I refer to your e-mail of 24 June 2016 to Mr [REDACTED], Senior Fisheries Officer, Inland Fisheries following a meeting in your office on 31 May 2016 to discuss the impact seals are having on fish stocks in the Quoile River. You are seeking information on proposed plans my Department has for the restocking of the Quoile River and if any further consideration has been given to the protection of fish stocks in the Quoile River.

Seals are protected under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1995 (as amended) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1995 (as amended), making it an offence to kill seals. The Wildlife Order provides further protection and makes it an offence to injure, disturb, transport and trade grey and common seals. The common seal is also a designated feature of Strangford Lough Special Area of Conservation.

Although seals are associated with the marine environment, they are a highly mobile species and are often reported inland. They are predators that feed primarily on fish but are also known to take birds. Therefore, the activity that is being complained of is a natural behaviour. Seals have unhindered access to many other rivers along the coast to feed and it is important that where barriers are put in place, that migratory fish continue to have access to and from the sea.

DAERA Inland Fisheries will on occasions remove coarse fish by netting these from other game fisheries and will consider relocating these fish to the River Quoile where possible in the future. There is also the option of sourcing coarse fish from Lough Neagh commercial fishermen and relocating these to the Quoile River. This would be at a cost to my Department and will have to be considered with competing budgetary priorities. However, these options could provide additional food for the seals which could make it more attractive to them.

The Quoile Barrier falls outside the remit of my Department and it is the responsibility of the Rivers Agency of the Department of Infrastructure.

Yours sincerely

Michelle McIlveen MLA
Minister of Agriculture Environment and Rural Affairs

**From the Office of the
Minister of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs**



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depalrtment o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Colin McGrath MLA
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BT4 3XX

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1st Floor
Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast
BT3 9ED
Telephone: 028 9052 4140
Email:
daera.assemblysupport@daera-ni.gov.uk

8th April 2026
AQW 43287/22-27

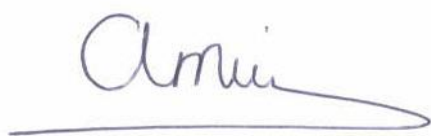
To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs to detail any actions that have been undertaken to protect fish stocks at the Quoile River and surrounding areas since 2012, including, (i) any deterrent measures deployed; (ii) monitoring of predator activity; (iii) measures taken to manage fish movement through the fish pass and grill systems; (iv) any assessment carried out regarding fish migration routes, including movement via Hare's Island; and (v) the amount spent on these interventions.

The Quoile Pondage is an impounded estuary created by a flood defence structure at Hare Island operated and maintained by the Department for Infrastructure (DfI) Rivers. The Quoile is managed by my Department as a wild Public Angling Estate water, while the Quoile Pondage Nature Reserve is managed by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can contact the Department via the Next Generation Text Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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- i. My Department has not implemented any deterrent measures to protect fish stocks from natural predation at this site.
- ii. My Department does not monitor predator activity at the Quoile Pondage.
- iii. The Quoile Barrier at Hare Island operates to prevent tidal flooding by closing at high tide and allowing fluvial discharge at low tide. There are no grill systems on the Quoile River, and responsibility for the barrier rests with DfI Rivers.
- iv. My Department has not undertaken any assessments of fish migration routes within the Quoile catchment. Juvenile electrofishing surveys carried out on the Annacloy River in July 2021 recorded trout fry, with salmon fry; sticklebacks and eels were also present.
- v. Electrofishing surveys are not individually costed for the Quoile River and are undertaken as part of my Department's wider Assigned Work Programme.



ANDREW MUIR MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

**From the Office of the
Minister of Agriculture,
Environment and Rural Affairs**



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

An Roinn

**Talmhaíochta, Comhshaoil
agus Gnóthaí Tuaithe**

Depairtment o'

**Fairmin, Environment
an' Kintra Matthers**

www.daera-ni.gov.uk

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Minister's Office
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Clare House
303 Airport Road West
Sydenham Intake
Belfast
BT3 9ED
Telephone: 028 9052 4140
Email:
daera.assemblysupport@daera-ni.gov.uk

21st April 2026
AQW 43930/22-27

**To ask the Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs,
pursuant to AQW 43287/22-27, to detail any actions undertaken by the NI
Environment Agency to protect fish stocks at the Quoile River and
surrounding areas, since 2012, including, (i) any deterrent measures
deployed; (ii) monitoring of predator activity; (iii) measures taken to manage
fish movement through the fish pass and grill systems; (iv) any assessment
carried out regarding fish migration routes, including movement via Hare's
Island; and (v) the amount spent on these interventions.**

The answer to AQW 43287/22-27 described measures taken across my
Department to protect fish stocks on the Quoile River and included any actions
undertaken by the NIEA in this regard.

If you are deaf or have a hearing difficulty you can
contact the Department via the Next Generation Text
Relay Service by dialling 18001 + telephone number.

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ANDREW MUIR MLA
Minister of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

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BACKGROUND NOTE.....AQW 43930/22-27

1. This AQW is a follow-up to AQW 43287/22-27 in which Mr McGrath asked you to detail actions to protect fish stocks at the Quoile River and surrounding areas since 2012.
2. This latest AQW seeks the same information but specifically asks for actions undertaken by the NIEA.
3. NIEA have advised that they have nothing further to add to the previous response.

FOR ANSWER ON: 30/04/2026

Drafted by: [REDACTED], 21/04/2026

Cleared by Dep Head of Division/Branch (G6): [REDACTED] 21/04/2026

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MFD Co-ord

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