



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

[www.daera-ni.gov.uk](http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk)



# DAERA Inland Fisheries 2022 Annual Report

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Inland Fisheries Responsibilities

The Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) Inland Fisheries is responsible, under the provisions of the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966, for the salmon and inland fisheries of Northern Ireland. In accordance with the Fisheries Act, DAERA has powers for the supervision and protection of fisheries and for fostering the establishment and development of fisheries.

It provides advice and guidance on matters relating to the conservation, protection, development and promotion of salmon and inland fisheries (excluding the Loughs Agency areas of Foyle and Carlingford) to angling clubs, fishery owners, and a range of other water users and interested parties.



## 1.2 Public Angling Estate

DAERA also has the power under the Fisheries Act to acquire and improve facilities for angling for local and visiting anglers. The Inland Fisheries Branch within DAERA is responsible for the management and development of Northern Ireland's

Public Angling Estate (PAE) which currently has a variety of lakes and rivers and game and coarse fisheries, where it owns or leases the fishing rights for those waters.

An annual programme of work is in place to maintain and develop facilities for anglers at these sites. There are some waters in the PAE where DAERA has management agreements in place with angling clubs or community groups to manage the fishery on their behalf.

## 1.3 Background

Inland Fisheries is one of 14 branches within Marine and Fisheries Division (MFD) which is part of DAERA's Environment, Marine and Fisheries Group (EMFG). The Division is responsible for managing the sustainable use of the marine environment and the promotion, protection, enhancement and



sustainable use of all fish stocks, inland and at sea (including aquaculture and fish health).

The work of the Marine and Fisheries Division and Inland Fisheries Branch contributes to the delivery of the Department's purpose of sustainability at the heart of a living, working, active landscape valued by everyone' and, thereby, improving the lives of the people living in Northern

Ireland

The Department has the four following key Strategic Priorities, which align to the Programme for Government Outcomes whilst also covering the Department's regulatory, governance and resource management responsibilities.



### Economic Growth

To enhance our food, forestry, fishery and farming sectors using efficient and environmentally sustainable models which support economic growth.



### Natural Environment

To protect and enhance our natural environment now and for future generations whilst advocating its value to and wellbeing for all.



### Rural Communities

To champion thriving rural communities that contribute to prosperity and wellbeing.



### Exemplar Organisation

To be an exemplar, people focused organisation, committed to making a difference for the people we serve.

## 2. LEGISLATION

### 2.1. Legislation

Under the Fisheries Act (NI) 1966, DAERA is charged with the establishment, development, supervision and protection of fisheries within its jurisdiction (the Loughs Agency has regulatory authority in the Foyle and Carlingford catchments). Within DAERA, Inland Fisheries Branch is responsible for discharging those functions relating to inland fisheries. There are also several pieces of subordinate legislation which further regulate activity on such fisheries.

The principle sets are the Fisheries Regulations (N.I.) 2014 which regulate angling and commercial activity and the Eel Fishing Regulations (N.I.) 2010 which set out requirements for commercial eel fishing (currently restricted to Lough Neagh). DAERA also manages (directly or in-directly) 90 publicly available fisheries which are governed through the Public Angling Estate (PAE) Regulations (N.I.) 2005.

While no new (or amendments to current) legislation progressed in 2022, there were a number of policy developments which required legal consideration and which may lead to legislative amendments in 2023/24. The most significant of these were the publication of Fishery Management Plans for Loughs Neagh and Erne.

In other legal work, a number of leases were renewed ensuring access for anglers at various PAE sites and the Branch also authorised several change-of-use designations for existing fisheries. Loughinisland Lake (Co. Down) and Boomers Dam (Co. Antrim) were re-designated as rainbow trout fisheries (meaning that they could remain open all year for the purposes of angling for rainbow trout).

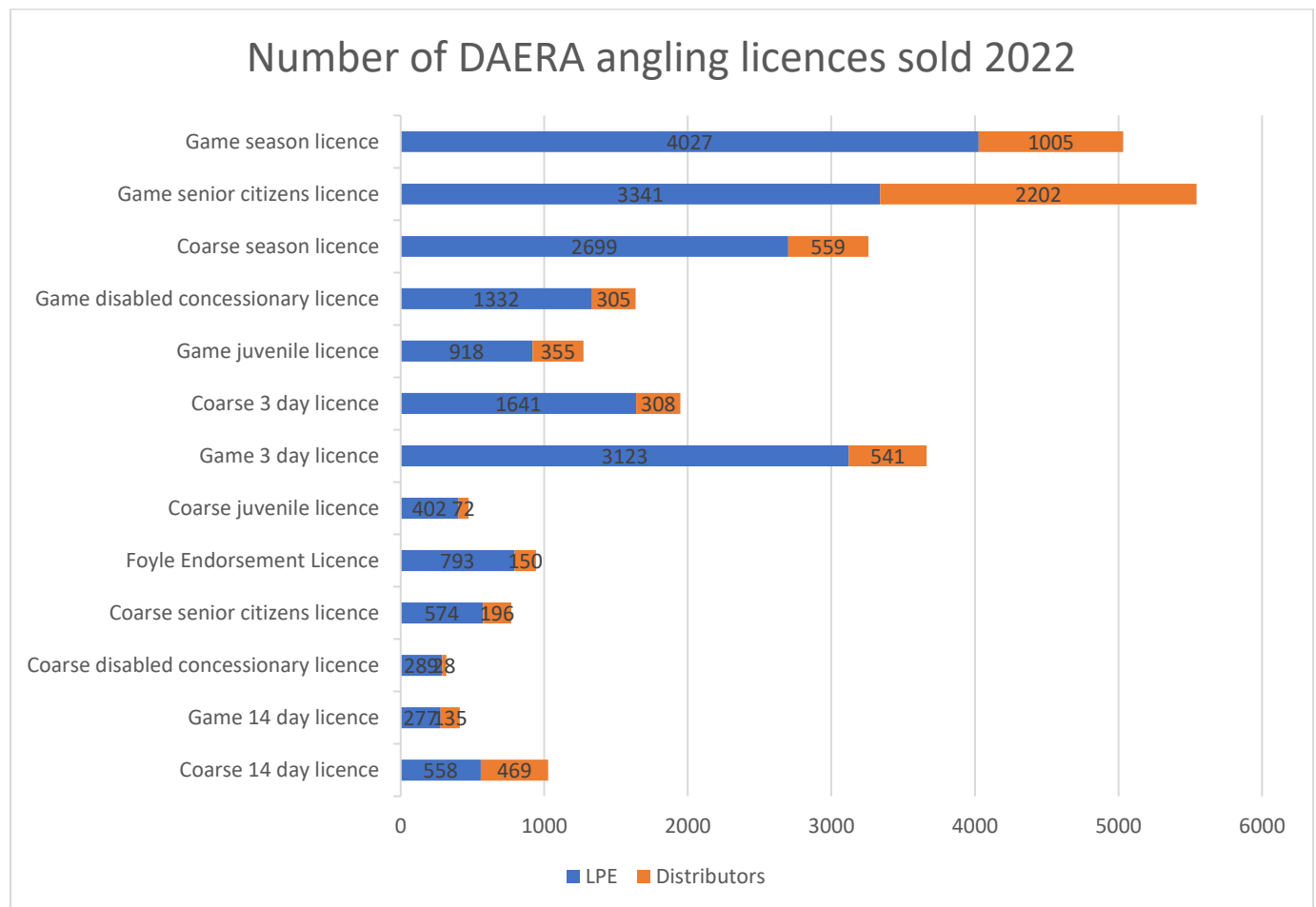
# 3. LICENCE & PERMITS

To fish legally in Northern Ireland you need (i) a rod licence and (ii) a permit or day ticket. The rod licence is for the fishing rod and the game or coarse fish you're allowed to catch. A permit or day ticket gives you the right to fish in a particular fishery.

## 3.1 Number of DAERA angling licences and permits sold for 2019 to 2022

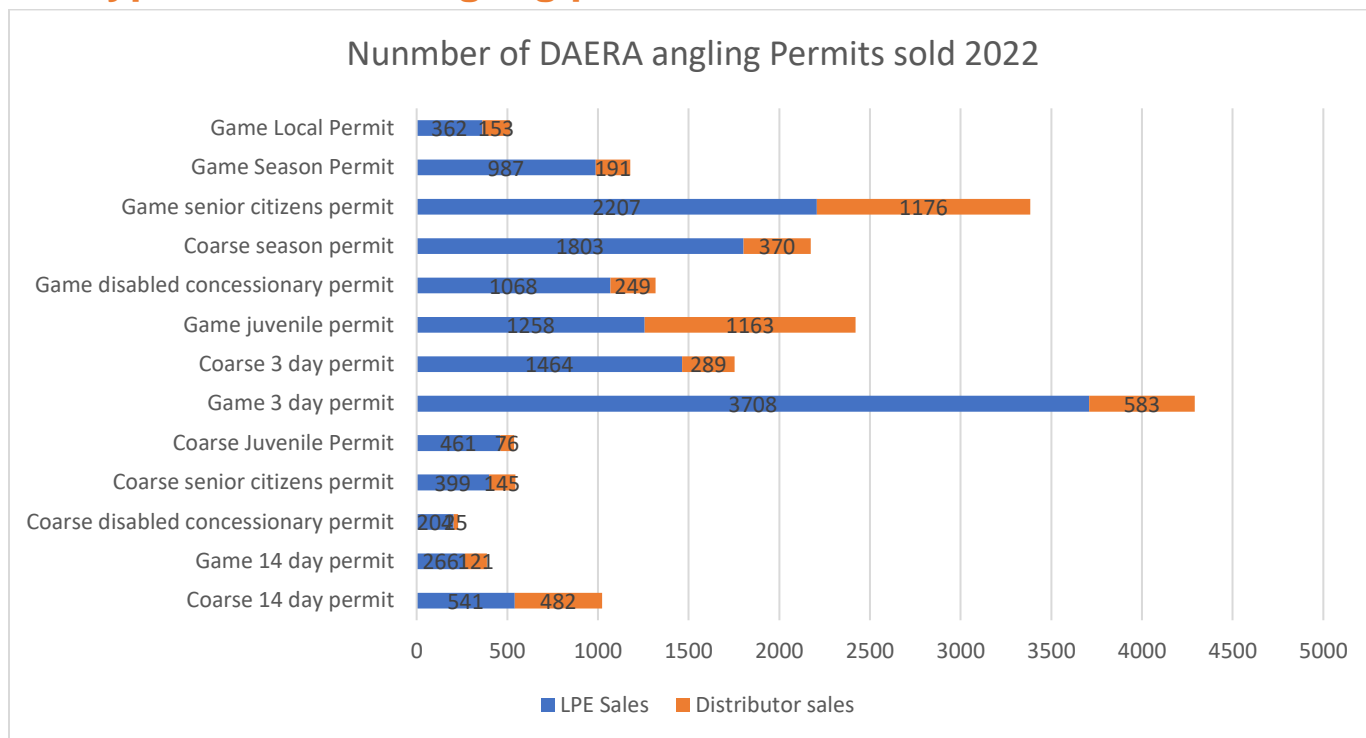
	2019	2020	2021	2022
Licences	25,938	28,169	27,752	26,298
Permits	18,686	20,566	20,019	19,751
Bush Tickets	803	952	857	899
<b>Total</b>	<b>45,427</b>	<b>49,687</b>	<b>48,628</b>	<b>46,948</b>

## 3.2 Type of DAERA angling licences sold 2022.





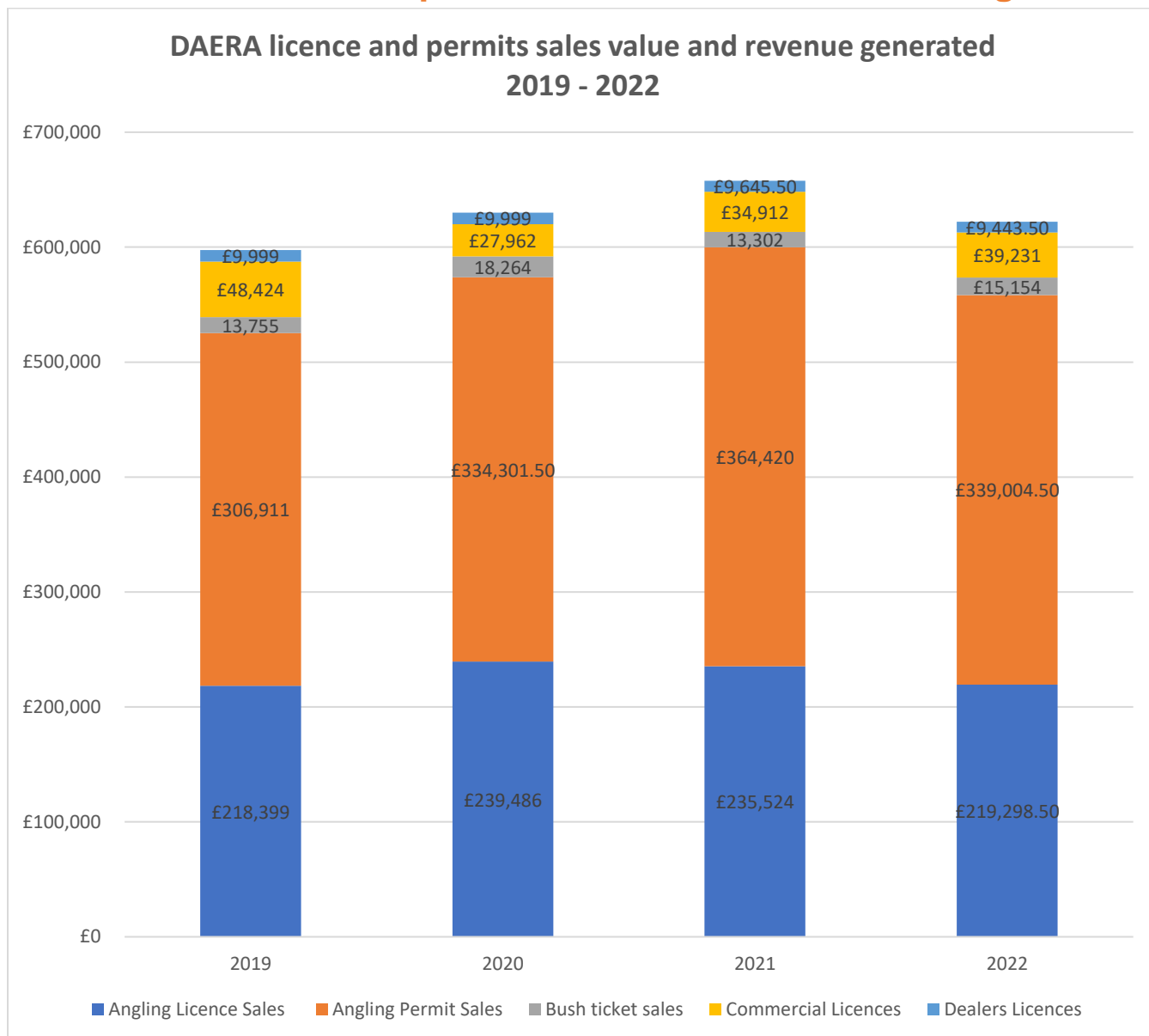
### 3.3 Type of DAERA angling permits sold 2022



### 3.4 Table – Total of DAERA licence and permits sold in 2022

	Licence	Permit	Day Ticket	Total
<b>Game Juvenile</b>	1,273	2,421	-	<b>3,694</b>
<b>Game Season</b>	5,032	1178	-	<b>6,210</b>
<b>Game Senior Citizen</b>	5,543	3383	-	<b>8,926</b>
<b>Game Disabled</b>	1,637	1317	-	<b>2,954</b>
<b>Game 3 day</b>	3,664	4291	-	<b>7,955</b>
<b>Game 14 day</b>	412	387	-	<b>799</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>17,561</b>	<b>12,977</b>		<b>30,538</b>
<b>Coarse Juvenile</b>	474	537	-	<b>1,011</b>
<b>Coarse Season</b>	3,258	2173	-	<b>5,431</b>
<b>Coarse Senior Citizen</b>	770	544	-	<b>1,314</b>
<b>Coarse Disabled</b>	316	229	-	<b>545</b>
<b>Coarse 3 day</b>	1949	1753	-	<b>3,702</b>
<b>Coarse 14 day</b>	1027	1023	-	<b>2,050</b>
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>7,794</b>	<b>6259</b>		<b>14,053</b>
<b>Bush Tickets</b>	-	-	899	<b>899</b>
<b>Local Area Permit</b>	-	515	-	<b>515</b>
<b>Endorsements</b>	943	-	-	<b>943</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>26,298</b>	<b>19,751</b>	<b>899</b>	<b>46,948</b>

### 3.5 DAERA licence and permits sales value and revenue generated



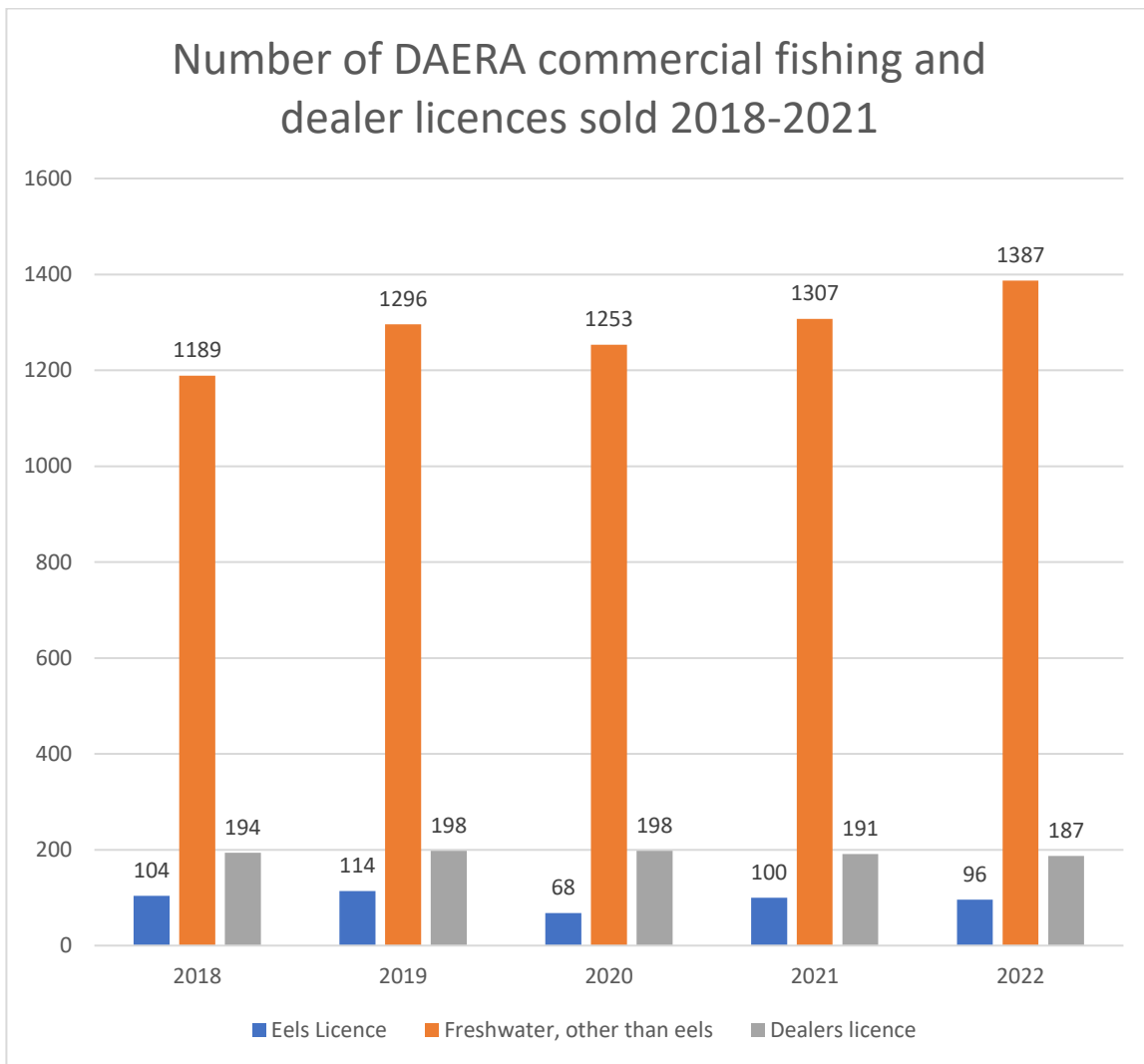
Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Angling licence sales	£218,399.00	£239,486.00	£235,524.00	£219,298.50
Angling permit sales	£306,911.00	£343,444.00	£364,420.00	£339,004.50
Bush tickets sales	£13,755.00	£18,264.00	£13,302.00	£15,154.00
<b>Angling Sales Total</b>	<b>£539,065.00</b>	<b>£601,194.00</b>	<b>£613,246.00</b>	<b>£573,457.00</b>
Minus 20% VAT on permits and Bush tickets	£64,133.20	£72,341.60	£75,544.40	£70,831.70
<b>Angling Revenue Total</b>	<b>£474,931.80</b>	<b>£528,852.40</b>	<b>£537,701.60</b>	<b>£502,625.30</b>
Commercial fishing licence revenue	£38,425.00	£32,746.00	£37,647.00	£39,231.00
Dealers licence revenue	£9,999.00	£9,999.00	£9,645.50	£9,443.50
<b>Commercial Total</b>	<b>£48,424.00</b>	<b>£42,745.00</b>	<b>£47,292.50</b>	<b>£48,674.50</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>£523,355.80</b>	<b>£571,597.40</b>	<b>£584,994.10</b>	<b>£551,299.80</b>



### 3.6. Commercial fishing and dealer licences

DAERA issues commercial fishing licences for eel, salmon and other freshwater species fishing.

- To assist conservation efforts, legislation was introduced in 2014 that prohibits commercial netting of salmon. There have been no licences issued for coastal salmon nets since 2013.
- The number of eel licences issued in 2022 is 96.
- The number of freshwater commercial licences issued in 2022 (1,387) increased by 6% compared to the number issued in 2021.
- Dealer licences, needed to sell freshwater fish and wild salmon to the public, are issued by DAERA in the DAERA jurisdiction. A dealer licence covers all vendors from fish vans to large supermarkets. In 2022, 187 dealer licences were issued.



# 4. ENFORCEMENT

## 4. Protection and enforcement

**NB. \*From 2022 Enforcement data is now collected on a calendar year to coincide with the licence and permit sales.**

### 4.1 Enforcement

**Table 4.1 Enforcement activity on DAERA and private waters 2018/19 to 2022**

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022*
<b>DAERA PAE waters</b>					
Rod Licences checked	2,359	2,504	2,170	2,410	2,297
DAERA permits checked	2,281	2,417	2,138	2,404	2,291
Detections of illegal activity	106	152	127	122	118
<b>Private waters</b>					
Rod licences checked	1,061	1,141	1,172	1,028	1,285
Detections of illegal activity	76	49	89	59	46
<b>All waters</b>					
Boat patrols	125	179	200	261	228
Coastal shore patrols	20	7	37	52	80
Illegal fishing nets seized	291	185	78	13	2

- Enforcement activity is both proactive and reactive; regular patrols are conducted to monitor commercial fishermen and anglers to ensure compliance with the 1966 Fisheries Act and Fisheries Regulations.
- DAERA enforcement officers work on both DAERA PAE waters and private waters in the DAERA jurisdiction.
- In 2022, there were 2,297 rod licences checked in DAERA PAE waters and 1,285 licences checked on private waters.

## 4. Protection and enforcement

### 4.2 Inspections

**Table 4.2 - Number of inspections 2018/19 to 2022**

	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022*
<b>Number of inspections</b>					
Commercial fish dealers inspections	46	40	36	37	38
Water abstraction site inspections	157	183	130	147	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>223</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>184</b>	<b>127</b>

- Regular inspections are carried out at commercial dealers to ensure that all freshwater fish being sold have been caught legally.

## 4. Protection and enforcement

### 4.3 Prosecutions and enforcement action 2018/19 to 2022

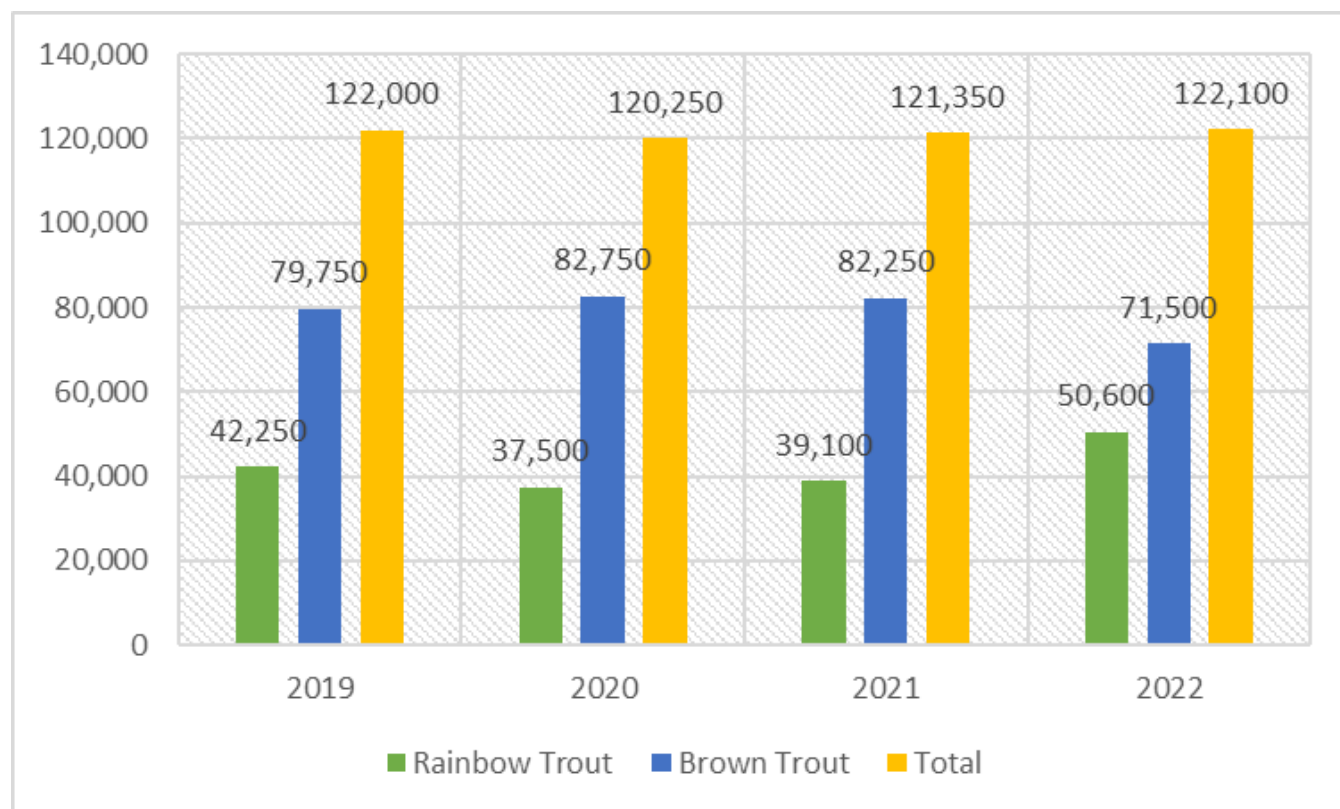
	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022*
Convictions	14	16	17	4	17
Warning letters issued	35	35	19	12	39
Advice letter given	95	173	168	117	163

- Where appropriate, DAERA prepares cases for prosecution for consideration by the Public Prosecution Service NI.
- DAERA may deal with less serious breaches of legislation by means of advisement and warning letters.

# 5. DAERA fish farms and hatchery

## 5.1. Movanager Fish Farm: takeable sized trout

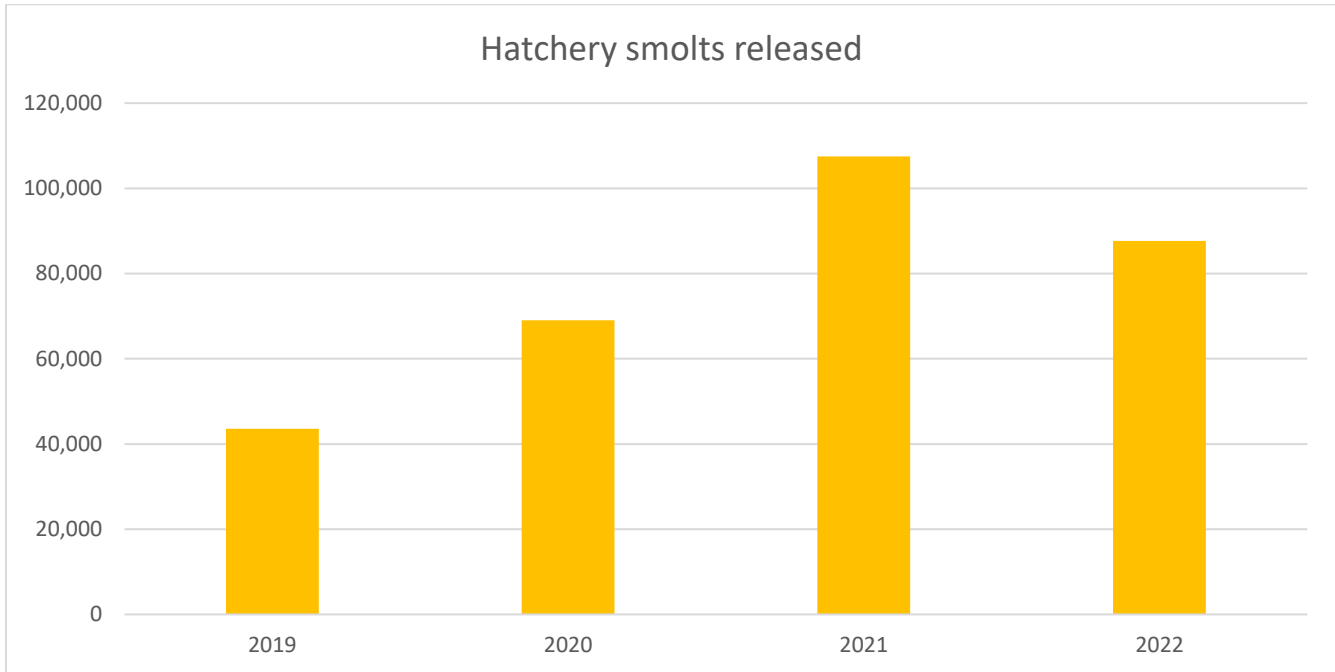
### Number of takeable sized trout stocked from Movanager Fish Farm 2019 – 2022



Takeable sized Trout		2019	2020	2021	2022
DAERA PAE Waters	Brown Trout	79,750	82,750	82,250	71,500
	Rainbow Trout	42,250	37,500	39,100	50,600
	<b>Total (PAE Waters)</b>	<b>122,000</b>	<b>120,250</b>	<b>121,350</b>	<b>122,100</b>

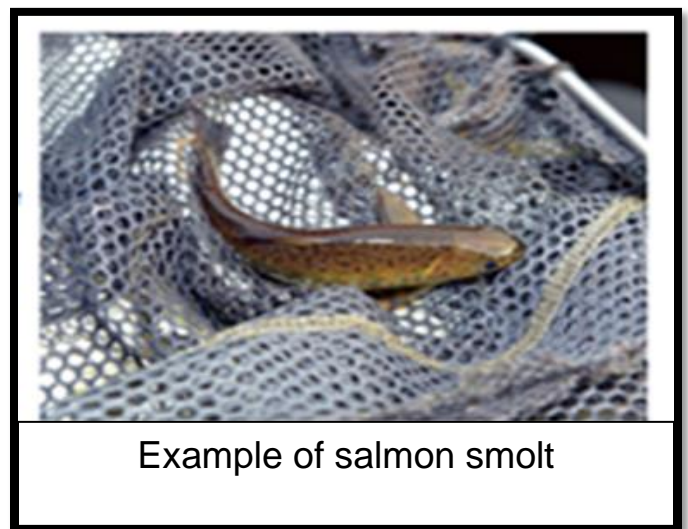
- DAERA Public Angling Estate (PAE) waters refers the circa 90 waters in the DAERA estate.
- Movanager Fish Farm produces brown and rainbow trout to stock the Department's public angling estate.
- DAERA has a target to stock 120,000 takeable sized (25 cm or longer) trout per year for recreational anglers.

## 5.2. Number of salmon smolts released from Bushmills Hatchery 2019 to 2022



Year	2019	2020	2021	2022
Salmon smolts released	43,579	69,031	107,505	87,701

- The Bushmills Hatchery also releases reared salmon smolts into the River Bush as part of the long-term salmon monitoring programme.
- The number of salmon smolts released in the River Bush in 2022 was 87,701.



# 6. INLAND FISHERIES EVENTS

## 6.1 Shows and Fairs 2022

Inland Fisheries staff participated in various shows throughout the calendar year, beginning with the annual Celebration of Sport in April 2022. The show attracted over 600 primary school children at Omagh Leisure Complex, with a vast array of sporting activities on show, and angling once again proving extremely popular with attendees. As usual, the angling simulator and casting instruction proved extremely popular with the children.



Inland Fisheries Staff introducing some of the school children to the display tank at Celebration of Sport.

In April, Inland Fisheries attended the North West Angling Fair at the Melvin Sports Complex in Strabane to promote fishing in DAERA's Public Angling Estate and to engage with stakeholders.





Inland Fisheries Staff manning the promotional table.

Next on the agenda was the Irish Game Fair held at its regular home of Shane's Castle outside Antrim. More than 5,000 visitors attended the fair and Inland Fisheries had its own dedicated angling area to showcase our angling outreach work and answer the many inquiries on the day. This was an extremely busy 2 days for the team and a great opportunity to highlight angling as a fantastic outdoor sport and activity.

A record number of visitors approaching 3,000 attended Bush Salmon Station as part of the annual Salmon & Whiskey Festival at Bushmills in early October. Since the River Bush Salmon Research Station was established in 1973, it has provided a significant contribution towards the establishment and continuing development of an evidence base necessary for Atlantic salmon management, not only in Northern Ireland and the British Isles but across the range of Atlantic salmon in the North Atlantic. An exceptionally busy two days for staff, those attending had only positive feedback on the tours around the station and the fantastic work on salmon conservation carried out there.



IF staff before opening on 1<sup>st</sup> day of Salmon & Whiskey Festival at Bushmills.

## 6.2. Community Outreach Angling Events Fund

Early in the 2010's, DAERA Inland Fisheries developed a Community Outreach Programme aimed at encouraging increased participation in the sport of angling.

The scheme was introduced as a competitive fund to provide support for angling events aimed at widening participation in the sport of angling. Inland Fisheries had an on-going objective to promote participation in angling by working with angling stakeholders to support events that introduce children and young people and under-represented groups to the sport.

The funding allowed applicants (including angling clubs, charities, schools and community groups) to seek support to host angling events. This included the purchase of angling equipment for future events without further support from DAERA, as well as safety equipment such as life jackets and safety glasses and the reimbursement of costs for fully qualified angling coaches to supervise these events.

The DAERA website states that the scheme was to:

- Assist groups and angling providers attract and introduce new participants to angling.
- Develop angling as a healthy, affordable and accessible sport, available to the widest possible range of participants and user groups.
- Promote angling as an effective means of tackling poverty and overcoming social exclusion by attracting under-represented groups.
- Promote the positive advantages of angling to women, young people and people with a disability.

The scheme was introduced as a pilot for an initial period 3 years but extended to 2022 due to the temporary cessation of the scheme over the COVID pandemic – the pilot officially ended on 7 November 2022.

A Post Project Evaluation (PPE) of the Community Outreach Angling Event Fund (Scheme) has since been carried out to provide an assessment of the outcome of the intervention and a summative assessment of the lessons learned throughout design and delivery.

The table below details the number of events (some run over a number of days), participants and expenditure per year and overall totals for the scheme.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>	<b>Totals</b>
<b>Events</b>	19	77	2	21	20	<b>139</b>
<b>Participants</b>	587	1,878	24	334	321	<b>3,144</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	£15,293	£21,364	£580	£6,843	£8,125	<b>£52,205</b>