



So what are the important facts that ensure the information you provide can assist a prosecution?

WHAT?

What exactly do you suspect them of doing? (Netting, gaffing, using poison, snatching?)

WHO?

Who is carrying out the activity? Are they known to you? Can you get a description that would help identify them later? Is there a vehicle involved and can you get the registration, make and model without putting yourself in danger.

WHERE?

We don't necessarily need grid references; you can refer to easily recognisable points such as bridges, or buildings, give approximate distances up or down stream from these locations. To identify which bank you are referring to imagine you are looking downstream and use left and right hand.

WHEN?

We need to know when it happened: now, this morning, yesterday evening? It is better for us that we get the information as soon as possible so we can make a decision on the appropriate level of response. Poaching by its very nature is dynamic and there is rarely any evidence left that will allow us to identify culprits once they have left. However that does not mean they will not come back later for another go.

The Loughs Agency does not recommend you to approach anyone you suspect of carrying out illegal fishing activity! These people are frequently prepared to resort to violence to make their escape.

what to do if you suspect evidence of illegal activity

Bearing in mind the unpredictable and possible violent nature of some of the individuals involved then your first action should be to contact the Loughs Agency or police control room. The Loughs Agency operates a 24hr emergency hot line to report incidents such as these. The telephone number is +44(0)28 71342100 from where you will be connected to an operator who will take details of the incident. You do not need to leave your name or contact details although a contact number would be helpful to allow for follow up questions for further clarification. You may be contacted by an officer involved in fisheries enforcement who will identify what, if any, further action you could take and advise you what the Loughs Agency's level of response will be. Loughs Agency enforcement officers are fully trained in the investigation of illegal fisheries incidents and will take responsibility for all fisheries related matters. If you are unable to contact the Loughs Agency please contact your local police station and pass on any information.

expected response

As is common with many enforcement agencies, the Loughs Agency may not have people actively on the ground in your area 24hrs a day. We rely on intelligence to enable us to plan and deploy our resources where they are most effective. Any information you provide will be recorded and processed in a way that allows officers involved in fisheries enforcement to evaluate and plan for efficient patrols and operations. This may mean a report will not initiate an immediate physical attendance. Equally, that does not mean it has been dismissed, just that resources are either deployed elsewhere or not available at the time. The information will be reviewed and appropriate action taken.

www.loughs-agency.org
24hr response line Tel: +44(0) 2871342100



OPERATION BRADEN

**every
fish
counts**

guide for anglers

The demand for wild salmon in the Foyle and Carlingford areas is greater than it has ever been before.

“A bar of silver” is the phrase most often used by anglers to describe a salmon or sea trout in prime condition, a reference to the almost metallic silver sheen of a pristine fish. If we take into consideration that each rod caught salmon can provide a boost for the local economy through tourism as well as its importance in conservation terms the full value of each fish becomes a reality.

Operation Braden is an initiative by the cross border Loughs Agency and part of a wider programme of partnerships between organisations working to tackle poaching and wildlife crime. Operation Braden is aimed at protecting migrating fish, one of our most valuable natural resources, from illegal exploitation. This will become an awareness campaign directed at enforcement bodies and anglers. The aim will be to provide information and advice that will help us and our partners to combat salmon poaching using the best intelligence available.

the offenders

The migratory cycle of salmon and sea trout is such that they are born in the headwaters of our rivers. Their early years are spent in the river until they leave and head for the rich feeding grounds around Greenland and the Arctic Circle. They remain there until the urge to breed compels them to return to the river where they were born. It is during this return migration that these great fish are of most interest to the legitimate fisherman and poachers alike. Forget the romantic image you may have of the poacher, they are no longer the rustic local character, wise in the ways of the countryside after ‘one for the pot’. They are frequently little more than a travelling criminal, intent on making as much money as they can by whatever means available. Whilst salmon that will sell for £3-5 per lb on the black market continue to prove an attractive proposition they will not refuse an opportunity that comes their way. Poachers are prepared to travel considerable distances to carry out their crime and round trip journeys in excess of 100 miles are not uncommon. Many poachers also have links to organised crime and gangs.

who regulates this?

The Loughs Agency is responsible for the enforcement of fisheries legislation in the Foyle and Carlingford areas in relation to salmon, trout, freshwater fish and eels. The Agency has substantial powers and duties to protect these fish and their officers are specialists in tackling environment crime.

when does this happen?

Salmon poaching can occur throughout the year although generally it will become more prolific from around June through to early December.

what are the signs of illegal poaching activity?

Individuals or small groups of people acting suspiciously on or near to river banks in remote locations could indicate an illegal netting operation. Strange lights shining at night in and around a river or burn often in remote areas may be an indication of ‘lamping’, where fish are taken as they prepare to spawn by use of a bright light and a gaff or spear.

how can you help?

As an angler or member of the public with concern for our environment what can you do if suspect poaching has taken or is taking place?

Everyone can be a valuable source of information, providing the link in a chain of evidence that ensures effective enforcement. However, to be of value the information needs to follow certain rules and obviously the sooner the information is passed on to the appropriate person the more chance we have dealing with the problem.

