



## DECLARATION

### THE FOYLE AREA (CONTROL OF OYSTER FISHING) REGULATIONS 2008

#### SUSPENSION OF OYSTER FISHING IN THE FOYLE AREA

I, John Pollock, Chief Executive of the Loughs Agency, Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission, hereby certify that The Commission is satisfied that it is necessary and expedient for the conservation and protection of native oysters (*Ostrea edulis*) to declare fishing for such oysters suspended in the entirety of The Foyle Area, as defined by The Foyle Area (Control of Oyster Fishing) Regulations 2008 as amended 2010, for the periods listed below.

“the defined mouth” in relation to the River Foyle, means the mouth of that river as defined by instrument dated 8th February 1864 made under section 17 of the Salmon Fishery (Ireland) Act 1863;

“Lough Foyle” means those waters in the Foyle Area bounded on the north or seaward side by an imaginary straight line drawn between Greencastle Fort in the County of Donegal and the Martello Tower at Magilligan Point in the County of Londonderry and bounded on the south by the defined mouth of the River Foyle;

“the River Foyle” means all of the River Foyle upstream of the defined mouth of the River Foyle;

“seaward of Lough Foyle” means those waters in the Foyle Area which lie seawards of an imaginary straight line drawn between Greencastle Fort in the County of Donegal and the Martello Tower at Magilligan Point in the County of Londonderry.

#### **Dates of suspension of fishing in The Foyle Area**

Fishing for native oysters (*Ostrea edulis*) is **suspended** in the entirety of The Foyle Area, as defined by The Foyle Area (Control of Oyster Fishing) Regulations 2008 as amended 2010, from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 at 06:00 hrs to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 at 18:00 hrs.

## Reasons for suspension of fishing in The Foyle Area

A survey and review of the Native Oyster population remaining in the Lough after the fishing period (October to December 2016) was undertaken in January / February 2017. After consideration of the results from this survey it has been decided that the fishery will be **closed for the entirety of March 2017**. This closure is to ensure the retention of the remaining stock on the beds in order to contribute to the adult broodstock and improve potential spawning and settlement in the 2017 season and beyond.

Removal of 100% of the stock above the minimum landing size is not sustainable. It is advisable to retain a proportion of the spawning stock above 80mm in the fishery in order to allow for stock replenishment and the achievement of effective spawning for the 2017 spawning season and beyond.

Stock assessments over the last number of years have shown a reduction in the frequency of young age classes of native oysters in the population with a shift towards the older demographics. This shift is as a result of poor settlement events in 2015 and 2016. Removal of further stock over 80 mm, from the fishery, this season, could exacerbate the situation by further reducing the density of reproductive adults potentially contributing to the population. Therefore, fishing activity in March 2017 could have a highly detrimental effect on future recruitment to the population.


### **NOW THEREFORE**

In pursuance of the said Regulations

I HEREBY SUSPEND OYSTER FISHING IN THE FOYLE AREA AS DEFINED BY THE FOYLE AREA (CONTROL OF OYSTER FISHING) REGULATIONS 2008 AS AMENDED 2010.

From:

- 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017 at 06:00 hrs to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2017 at 18:00 hrs.

Signed:  (Chief Executive)  
JOHN POLLOCK

Dated: 20<sup>th</sup> February 2017