

1 RICH TIME - TUESDAY 4+4 SEPT 24 2012

# Letters to the Editor

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## The future of fishing

Sir, - Richie Flynn of the IFA writes (August 31st) of an "inexplicable delay" in the State processing aquaculture license applications. The delay has been explained again and again to him by the Minister for the Marine, Simon Coveney.

Salmon farming is a highly polluting industry, with nitrogen and phosphate loads discharging directly into our western coastal bays.

The proposed salmon farm in Bantry Bay would have a discharge (nitrogen and phosphorous) equivalent to the sewage of a town 10 times the size of Bantry, in spite of the fact that a local authority-commissioned tidal study in 1989 showed that in Bantry Bay, "during prolonged periods of calm weather complete flushing would [take] at least 1-2 months".

The "offshore super-salmon farm" proposed for Galway Bay would have a sewage equivalent of more than twice the population of Galway city.

Nutrient enrichment can fuel toxic algae blooms, which have cost the shellfish industry dearly and for which many bays are regularly closed to harvesting every summer.

Salmon farming near the rivers where our native salmon spawn

damages their survival rates through sea lice infestations from the open pen cages.

The EU habitats directive requires baseline studies and environmental impact statements. Licensees can be granted only if the project will not have adverse impacts on protected species and habitats.

As the Minister told the Seanad in January, "the way in which we provided aquaculture licences in the past was not up to scratch. The European Commission took a case against Ireland and won it. We are now being forced to put in place a gold-plated licensing system."

If Richie Flynn and the IFA wish to see aquaculture progress in a coherent and efficient manner, they should support the Environmental Protection Agency and Ireland's environmental NGOs, which are calling for a strategic environmental assessment of the Food Harvest 2020 plan to increase the already stressed farmed salmon production by an astonishing 300 per cent. - Yours,

TONY LOWES,  
Friends of the Irish  
Environment,  
Kilcatherine,  
Eyeries,  
Co Cork.