

RECREATIONAL ANGLING TOURNAMENTS PARTICIPANTS' EXPENDITURES

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CONTEXT

Tournaments are a common feature of recreational angling, with upwards of 300 competitive angling events per annum in Ireland. Prior research has indicated that angler expenditures in Ireland exceed €555 million per annum but little is known specifically about angling tournaments and their economic contribution. Angling tournaments entail relatively short periods of intense activity, usually within a small geographic area, and consequently their economic impact can be quite significant in the local economy. A comprehensive understanding of tournament participants and their expenditures would be practical information for fishery managers and angling clubs seeking to raise funds, develop facilities, or boost local economic activity.

BACKGROUND

The research is based on survey data elicited from anglers participating in either local club matches or larger angling tournaments during 2013. The survey was conducted over an eight month period, designed to coincide with the busiest period in Ireland in terms of angling events (March-October) and covers more than 100 separate angling competitions. The research is essentially an analysis of angling tournament participants' expenditure to provide a better understanding of what are the main drivers of anglers' expenditure, particularly expenditures that occur within the general area of the angling event both on food and lodgings as well as angling related services.

¹ This Bulletin summarises the findings from: Curtis, J. Hynes, S., O'Reilly, P., and Breen, B., "Recreational angling tournaments: participants' expenditures", *Journal of Sport & Tourism*, Available online: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14775085.2017.1322998>

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FINDINGS

Among the findings are that coarse anglers (i.e. fishing for non-salmonids, such as bream, tench, and roach), predominantly from Great Britain, spend substantially more than other anglers irrespective of target species or angler country of origin. British coarse anglers spend approximately €170/tournament more than coarse anglers from Ireland on angling related items and €350/tournament more on food and accommodation. On a per angler basis, coarse and pike angling tournaments are more lucrative to local accommodation and food hostelrys compared to other target species, and especially so if the participants are travelling from overseas. While the economic contribution of visiting anglers is well recognised, especially visiting trout and salmon anglers, this finding suggests that visiting coarse and pike anglers also bring a strong tourism benefit.

Among anglers visiting from overseas there is a negligible difference in food and accommodation expenditure among those that stayed in hotel, guest-house or B&B accommodation, with visitors staying in self-catering accommodation spending somewhat less. This suggests that the economic contributions of visiting anglers are broadly similar irrespective of the type of accommodation, at least for the tournament anglers in our sample.

Within angling-related expenses we find that among tournament anglers there is an 80/20 split between 'low' and 'high' spend anglers. The minority 'high' spend anglers spend up to 4 times as much as other anglers both at local club competitions as well as more prestigious tournament events. The practical implication is that tournament organisers should plan sufficient resources and facilities for event participants to maximise the local economic benefit of tournaments (e.g. catering and retail opportunities).

We found no evidence that anglers with higher incomes spend more on either angling expenses or food and accommodation. The implication is that if local economic impact is an objective for tournament organisers there is no evidence that targeting high-income anglers will be more beneficial.

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