



Are you willing to work for better bass fishing?

BASS chairman **Ian Misselbrook** talks about two developments that will protect Irish bass fishing

The New Year brings real concerns about our economic future and social environment as world events dominate the news channels.

All these huge issues will have a major effect on our quality of life, but whatever the situation, we will still go fishing and if we are to survive these trying times we need our sport to have as much chance of success as possible.

One major success last year, for which I congratulate all those involved, was the Republic of Ireland's Fisheries Minister Simon Coveney rejecting an approach by commercial fishing interests to open up commercial fishing for bass. His decision came after much hard work and campaigning by John Quinlan of Irish Bass, and it has secured a positive future for Irish bass fishing by retaining the existing ban on commercial fishing for bass.

He confirmed the continued argument that the species is a recreational sea angling (RSA) resource only, and was not proposing changes at this time to the current arrangements. So what does it mean for British bass anglers?

To the many anglers who visit Ireland on a regular basis it means that the quality of their bass fishing (Irish fish tend to bigger than ours) is maintained, and cannot be damaged by commercial fishing activity. It also means that everyone involved in bass angling will have their livelihoods protected. I only wish the UK could follow in their footsteps.



Left: Ian Misselbrook with a typical UK bass
Top right: Irish bass size regulations
Right: Fighting for Irish bass

Comparing catches

On a recent trip to Dorset with fellow BASS member Matt Spence, we discussed our fishing experiences, both in Ireland and at home.

The conclusion was that whatever degree of success we've had, the average size of bass regularly caught at home was around the 1-2lb mark while in Ireland it was 2-4lb, with the chance of fish to 8lb a distinct possibility.

Whatever anyone says, this management, protection of resource, conservation, call it what you like, does seem to have a positive effect on Irish bass stocks.

If we want stocks restored to what they were in the 1970s there will be a price to pay, and that will need to be paid by the commercial and RSA sectors. We anglers cannot expect to have it all our own way, and we shouldn't keep bringing past disputes or historical posturing into our case for change, valid as they might seem.

I digress. This is about congratulating all in the RSA community, which, over the past years, have written, lobbied and harangued the people in power who have the influence to change the situation, often with little or no success.

For once we do appear to have a success and I don't think we should underestimate its value, particularly as it coincided with Northern Ireland adopting the bass management legislation that exists in the Republic.

While not total harmonisation, and only being about bass in Northern Ireland, it is a good basis



The Irish ring-fence their bass, and this is what they catch

CAOMHNAITEAR AN BHAS DE REIR DUL	BASS ARE PROTECTED BY LAW
Ceadaitear uasmhéid de 2 Bhas do gach Iascaire	Daily Bag Limit 2 Bass per Angler
Uasmhéid toirte de 40cm (15.75")	Size Limit is 40cm (15.75")
Séasúr dunta 15ú Bealtaine go 15ú Meitheamh	Closed season 15 May to 15 June
Bord Iascaigh Réigiúnach an Iarthuaisirt	RDFFA WESTERN REGIONAL FISHERIES BOARD
Guthán: 026-41221	Let's look after our Bass
Tugaimis aire dár mBas	

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What can you do?
Write letters to Ministers and your MP
Join the Irish Bass and let your voice be heard
www.ukbass.com and let your voice be heard

We are asking for your help to fight for Irish recreational bass fishing

to begin altering the culture within the rest of the UK's management of marine resources.

With bass effectively becoming an 'RSA only species' in Northern Ireland, it will be the first instance in the UK for such a designation. This will contribute to altering the mindset of decision makers and politicians, who currently perceive commercial fishing as the 'all important' sector.

The decision by the Irish Republic really means that the RSA sector has the potential for considerable political influence, as long as anglers have regard for the bigger picture, put aside minor differences and maintain their unity.

We bass anglers need further successes, and I can assure you BASS is working on a number of fronts to achieve many of them. **SA**