

## **27/07/2024**

- 21:40 returned call to [REDACTED], Manager of IDAS Fish Farm, following receipt of voice message from him, stating that he was experiencing fish mortalities at the Coats Bridge fish farm. Matthew Carroll (MC) advised that he would attend the scene on the Sunday morning 28/07/2024 and that he would liaise with colleagues re., same. [REDACTED] advised that he had called confidential hotline. MC spoke with Michaela Kirrane (MK) and organized to meet in Aughrim on following morning. Advised [REDACTED] of arrangement and requested that he take a water sample from Coates bridge farm.

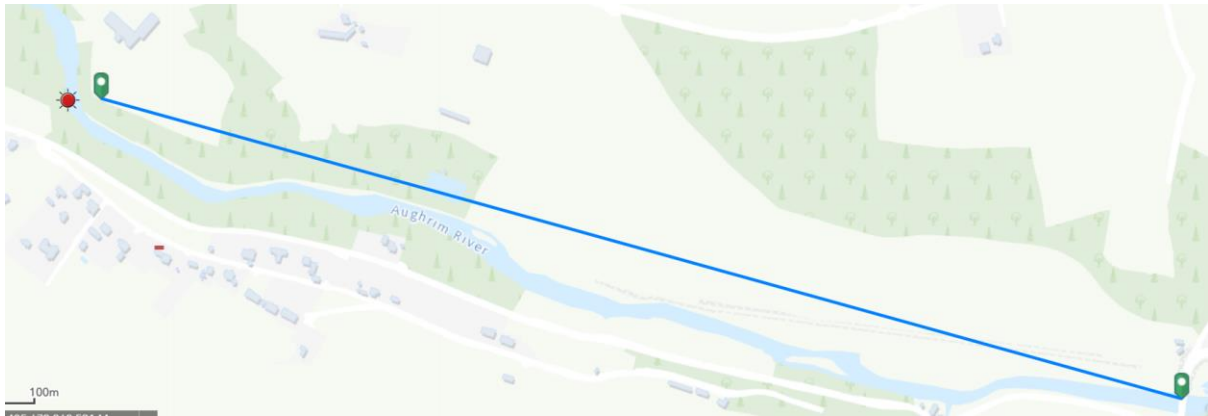
## **28/07/2024**

- 07:00am MC began investigations in the Aughrim area, inspecting known discharge locations and facilities that may have been responsible for fish mortalities. MC observed large numbers of fish mortalities within the river at Coates bridge, Salmon, ST, BT, Lamprey.
- MC & MK inspected the river u/s from Coates bridge to WWTP for Aughrim, observing fish mortalities beginning at a location within 20 m from the old rail crossing of the Aughrim River and continuing d/s to Coates Bridge.
- MC contacted Owen Kenny, overseer UE/Wicklow Co Co and advised of the situation and requested that an inspection of the WWTP be undertaken to ensure all was operating correctly. Caretaker for WWTP inspected plant and liaised with SOS.
- Rob Mortimer (RM), Fisheries officer inspected Aughrim River from Woodenbridge u/s to Coats bridge and spoke with anglers along length of river. No mortalities within river observed until in the Coates bridge area.
- MC & MK met with [REDACTED] who advised that estimates of mortalities within the fish farm were enormous and that he expected it to reach up between 15-20 tonnes.
- MC & MK advised that they would return on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> to continue investigations and inspect some businesses in the area that may have been responsible for a discharge which resulted in such large fish mortalities.
- MK took possession of a water sample taken by [REDACTED] on Saturday evening from the raceway within the Coates Bridge fish farm and took further water sample at Coats Bridge.
- MC gave MK a fish sample into her possession, Salmo Trutta (sea trout) from within the Aughrim River at a location 10m u/s of Coats Bridge.

## **29/07/2024**

- MC spoke with Tom Griffin (TG) from Wicklow Co Co and advised of events to date and planned actions and requested assistance.

- MC/Roisin Callaghan (ROC) accompanied by the owner of Woodfab Timber Ltd, [REDACTED] carried out an inspection of Wood Timber Ltd premises in Aughrim and inspected the tanalising plants, and reviewed processes on-site and **examined** infrastructure for possible defects etc. Noted tidy well maintained site with no obvious discharge points. Did note the storage of tanalising chemical and the potential, which if released into the aquatic environment would result in large fish mortalities. [REDACTED] informed MC & ROC that the tanalising plants had been operational on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> and that tanalising took place but not in number 3 unit (the older of the three)
- Constant communications were ongoing throughout the day between MC, ROC, & MK and Wicklow Co Co in relation to the investigation and deciding how to proceed with investigation
- MC & ROC met up with Catherine Hook (CH) and Graine McGuire (GMcG), Wicklow Co Co and carried out joint investigations in the area.
- MC spoke with epa inspector Brendan Kissane and advised of inspection of the Wood Industries site and was advised that an epa inspection would take place in the following days.
- [REDACTED] was advised of how investigation was proceeding and that investigations would be ongoing.
- MC spoke with Samantha White (SW) from the Marine institute seeking advice on possible toxicology testing of fish carcass and was advised the MI does not conduct such tests and that she would try and find possible facility to do analysis.
- MC updated TG Wicklow Co Co of investigation progress and that he might consider a press release from the Council advising the public/businesses of the dangers to the environment from the poor management of toxic chemicals. Sent photos of dead fish to CH, Wicklow CoCo.
- MC liaised with Owen Kenny (OK) from UE/Wicklow Co Co and requested that a further inspection of the WWTP be undertaken to ensure compliance. Advised by OK that following inspections on Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> and Monday 29<sup>th</sup> July that they were satisfied that there had been no issues at the WWTP.



**30/07/2024**

MK & Carl Owens (CO) carried out electrofishing in the vicinity of Coats bridge u/s to where fish mortalities ended and above.

MC liaised with Wicklow Co Co and requested that they carry out a number of inspections of specific premises in the Aughrim area which they complied with and reported back inspection findings, which raised no alarms or findings.

MC liaised with [REDACTED] on a number of occasions throughout the day and advised him

- Investigation was ongoing and no discharge found
- That IFI had inspected an epa facility and that IFI had been informed by the epa that they would also be inspecting their licenced facility.
- Requested if the information on numbers and weights of mortalities could be used by IFI communications officer John Lawrence (JL) to which [REDACTED] stated No, that that information was commercially sensitive and that it could only be stated that there had been substantial losses at a fish farm in the vicinity of Coats Bridge”.
- MC advised JL of [REDACTED] position about release of any information relating to specific numbers of mortalities within the fish farm.

MC Received call from epa inspector Gillian Eustace (GE) advising that an inspection had taken place of Woodfab Timber Ltd and that it was admitted by them, that they had a substantial leak on Saturday afternoon 27<sup>th</sup> July of tanalising product which contained pesticides from one of their tanalising plants. MC advised GS to discuss with her colleagues and to see what actions they could consider, as the site was licensed by them, the epa and that an incident happened within the licensable area which had the

potential to impact the aquatic environment and that IFI had no evidence of connectivity between the site and the river and no discharge.

MC advised MK of epa findings and advised to return to Woodfab Timber Ltd site and carry out investigations to try and establish connectivity from the tanalising plant to the river. MC updated Barry Fox (BF) of current status and liaised with IFI communications officer JL.

MC in the company of MK & CO interviewed [REDACTED], environmental compliance with Woodfab Timber Ltd who outlined the events that led to the discharge of tanalising liquid on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> August @ approx. 15:00hrs onwards.

[REDACTED] outlined that on the last run of the day at the older of the Tanalising plants, that an employee may have accidentally opened a valve on the pressure vessel which resulted in a substantial discharge to ground/infiltration area.

IFI outlined that our main aim was to put in measures ASAP that would prevent any possibility for the deleterious material that had been discharged to ground entering the aquatic environment. Any measures to be agreed with the epa who were the authority on the site, and at this point, IFI had no evidence of a discharge to the river resulting from the incident on site on 27/07/24 and that it would be for either them or the epa to inform stakeholders if they believed there was and further threat to the aquatic environment that may cause further fish mortalities.

MC spoke with epa inspector Brendan Kissane and advised that

- he had spoken with his colleague, Gillian Eustace.
- that the incident was within a facility licenced by the epa and that they had jurisdiction within that facility and that they would have to consider their options, including, that the epa should consider informing stakeholders if they believed there was a risk to the aquatic environment that may cause fish mortalities considering that they are aware of at this point.
- That IFI's primary aim is to ensure that there is no future discharges on the site and that if there was any contaminants or residual contaminants in the soils that it cannot make its way to the river.
- That they have no evidence or samples from a discharge resulting from the spillage on Wood Industries site that can be linked to the fish kill on 27/04/2024 and therefore it was up to the epa as to how to proceed in dealing with a major non-compliance on their licensable facility, up to and including legal actions and what the license holder is allowed to do in order to reduce the risk of and discharge into the aquatic environment.
- That the epa should consider that civil legal actions are possible by impacted parties if it were to be established that the discharge at their licensed facility resulted in causing the fish mortalities at the fish farm facility on 27/04/2024.

**31/07/2024**

MC, ROC, MK composed email to epa relating to their licenced facility and sent to BF for approval. Email approved and sent to the epa on same day.

MC answered a number of queries from the public relating to the incident all of which stated that the investigation is live and ongoing and that to date they had no evidence of a direct discharge that would have resulted in the fish mortalities on the Aughrim River.

MC spoke with [REDACTED] on a number of occasions and advised on suggested parameters to test for in fish toxicology following his request. Advised [REDACTED] of parameters on the basis of activities that were in the vicinity of the fish kill, Waste water, horticultural, wood preservation and agriculture.

**01/08/2024**

MC received email from epa which they had sent to Wicklow co co and also stating that they “have instructed our licensee to inform stakeholders”.

MC liaised with Wicklow co co, Mr Jonathan Sexton (JS) following receipt of email and updated him on events to date surrounding the incident. Advised JS that investigation is still live and that we do not have and discharge points to the river or evidence of the cause of fish kill.

MC spoke with [REDACTED] who asked if IFI had sample results. Which MC stated “no” and reiterated that they still have a live investigation and that they have no evidence of the source of the pollution which resulted in the fish kill, but have concerns about the incident on the Wood Industries site and that nature of the materials leaked to the ground, that there could be a serious threat to the aquatic environment if it were to reach the Aughrim River.

MC spoke with [REDACTED] who informed him that he was made aware by both the epa and the LA of a discharge of dangerous material at a facility, that may impact his fish farm if it were to get into the aquatic environment. [REDACTED] also requested could he get a portion of the sample taken by him on 27/07/2024 and given to IFI on 28/07/2024. MC said he would see if that was possible. MC reiterated that they still have a live investigation and that they have no evidence of the cause of the pollution, but have concerns that the incident which [REDACTED] now knows about through the epa and the LA poses a very high risk to the aquatic environment if it were to reach it.

[REDACTED] asked if he could get a portion of the sample that he had taken on the 26<sup>th</sup> and had given into the possession of IFI. MC delivered sample after collection from TMS labs to [REDACTED] @ 20:30 in Rathdrum.

MC explained the fact that there may not be enough sample for two runs and that because IFI have no evidence of where discharge is that they would be asking for other tests other than what is in the known discharge and do you want your sample back.

**02/08/2024**

MC received update from J. Sexton, Wicklow co co on events to date at their end.

**08/08/2024 & 09/08/2024 & 12/08/2024**

MC contacted TMS re analysis

**12/08/2024**

MC spoke with [REDACTED] who informed him that toxicology reports on the fish flesh for those samples taken at coats bridge fish farm tested positive for the two fungicides which are contained in the material discharged on an epa licensed facility u/s of coats bridge and that there were no traces found in the fish samples from either the Aughrim or wooden bridge farms.

MC advised [REDACTED] that we were having difficulty getting analysis for both fungicides and fish toxicology.

**16/08/2024**

MC received a call from epa inspector, Mr Billy Shannaghan (BS) with both parties updating each other as to the status of their respective investigations. BS informed MC that the epa had a discharge at one of their licensed facilities, however they could not at this time demonstrate effect or impact on the aquatic environment. MC advised BS that the fish farm operator had toxicology results for dead fish from the fish farm at coatsbridge and from control fish from the Aughrim and Woodenbridge fish farms which confirmed the presence of specific pesticides/herbicides in the dead fish from the coatsbridge facility and none in the two control samples. BS agreed to MC contacting [REDACTED] to see if he would be available to meet to discuss the fish kill and to share his results. MC contacted [REDACTED] and advised of request from BS, which [REDACTED] agreed to facilitate.

MC provided contacts to both parties, BS and [REDACTED] who communicated with each other.

**20/08/2024**

MC spoke with [REDACTED] re scheduled meeting with the epa on 21/08/2024 an advised that he should consider sharing information with them and that if they had sufficient evidence to encourage them to take a case.

**21/08/2024**

MC took possession of the fish sample taken on the 29/07/2024 from the Aughrim River and packaged and dispatched to Fera Science Ltd in the UK for analysis.

**05/09/2024**

Spoke with Billy Shanaghan (epa) and advised of current situation from IFI perspective. Advised of evidence gathered to date.

**09/09/2024**

MC received a call from [REDACTED] (environmental manager Woodfab, looking for an update on IFI's investigation. MC informed [REDACTED] that IFI were still awaiting results for lab analysis and that when all the information was available to IFI that they would collate it and make a decision whether there was sufficient evidence available to pursue legal actions/prosecution. MC also advised [REDACTED] that in circumstances where legal actions may be pursued that the less discussed by both parties the better.

**13/09/2024**

MC spoke with Billy Shanahan from the epa and advised of evidence gathered to date by IFI and that it was mainly circumstantial but not beyond taking a case. Advised BS that IFI were prepared to share all their information and evidence, providing statements and expert witness if they were to take a case, subject to approval by line managers.

BS stated that they were still conducting their own investigations and that upon completion it would be presented to Bord/Managers to decide whether they would take a case. MC queried under what legislation they might take a case, breach of licence, epa act, Water pollution act which BS could not confirm!! BS stated that they are awaiting the company to complete cctv investigations on their behalf.

**22/10/2024**

MC spoke with Billy Shanahan (epa) who requested that IFI provide witness statements by 6<sup>th</sup> November and that he would then present all the evidence to the Board of the epa following conducting a cautioned interview with directors from Wood Industries and env manager for a decision to be made as to whether to pursue legal actions. MC agreed in principle subject to having a conversation with colleagues.

**08/11/2024**

Meeting with Billy Shanahan in CityWest and presented statements and all evidence gathered to date to epa on the understanding that if a court case were to be initiated that it would include the impact to the aquatic environment beyond the licensed facility.

Mr. Shanahan said that approval from the Bord of the epa to proceed with legal action would be sought. IFI required an answer ASAP in the event that the epa were not going to proceed with legal actions so as IFI could consider their options.

**04/12/24** MC spoke with BS and was updated on progress.

**16/12/24** BS advised MC that legal proceedings were to be taken against Wood Industries which would include the impact on the aquatic environment.