

Public questions at March NRW Board meeting

(Received in addition to questions on Water Quality and the Wild Bird Review: General Licences)

| Question asked | | NRW response |
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| 1 | <p>Kim Waters, Welsh Rivers Union</p> <p>The Salmon and Seatrout “Plan” See https://naturalresources.wales/about-us/strategies-and-plans/salmon-and-sea-trout-plan-of-action-2020/salmon-and-sea-trout-plan-of-action-for-wales-2020-overview/?lang=en</p> <p>This is not a plan, it has no start, no end goal and, no accountability. Any document that uses the word plan must have a clear end point and goal within an accountable timeframe.</p> <p>Can you advise when a plan will be delivered?</p> <p>Has NRW briefed the WG species champions of the dire state of their species stocks in Wales, the term catastrophic is not an overstatement. The Atlantic Salmon and Sewin (Huw Iranca Davies and Cefin Campbell cc’d here). Are they engaged with you?</p> | <p>The Principal Advisor, Fisheries, responded to the question and clarified that the plan of action was a collation of the many actions and activities that were ongoing and aimed at addressing the many factors affecting the decline in salmon and sea trout stocks. These include a variety of business-as-usual activities, specific projects and activities, delivered by NRW and our partners.</p> <p>The plan is set out on the website and shows the various dates associated with those different activities. As such we recognise that there was no specific end point for the overall plan, as these were actions that would be continuing for a long period of time.</p> <p>We report on progress against these activities to Welsh Government and our advisory group, the Wales Fisheries Forum. We also report on many of these measures to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation as part of the UK contribution to the international implementation plan. We also regularly brief WG on the status of salmon and sea trout stocks and progress against the measures in the plan of action. We have not recently had the opportunity to discuss these issues with the Senedd species champions, but we would welcome the opportunity to do.</p> |

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| 2 | Gareth Wardell What is the number of NRW employees responsible for forestry regulation, and how many of them are accredited professional foresters? | The Executive Director of Operations responded to the question. NRW had a Forest Regulation and Plant Health team of 11 staff which included the following: one team leader; two senior officers, six regulatory woodland officers and two technical support officers. Two of the team were focused on animal health matters. All the team were educated to high standards, holding relevant qualifications ranging from HNC through to MSc and were appropriately qualified for regulating in the forestry sector. All team members were encouraged to pursue membership of professional bodies as part of their development. Four of the team currently held Associate Membership of the Institute of Chartered Foresters and were working towards Professional Membership. Other team members were members of the Royal Society of Biology and the Institute of Leadership and Management. It was noted that a mix of qualifications was needed in the regulatory field. |
| 3 | Gareth Wardell If the number of accredited foresters in the regulatory aspect of NRW's work was so good, why were there repeated and valid complaints about NRW's overzealous legal interpretation of felling licence applications and the very slow pace on its verification of Glastir applications. Did NRW need more accredited foresters? | The Executive Director of Operations confirmed that NRW believed that it had the appropriate number to handle the numbers coming through the regulatory team and the Glastir scheme. Any specific complaints could be addressed offline. |