

Scottish Branch – outline statement on Wild Fisheries Review

About us

The Institute of Fishery Management's Scottish Branch (IFM) welcome the opportunity to comment on the Wild Fisheries Review.

IFM is an international independent professional body representing the interests of fishery management. Scottish Branch exists to promote sound, evidence-based fishery management in Scotland, promoting best practice in all areas of management. IFM has no vested proprietorial or economic interest in fisheries, and as such is well placed to take an objective view based on good science and best practice.

Our over-riding interest is that fundamentally, all fisheries must be managed on a sustainable basis, using the best available data and information to support management decisions. We are aware that some decisions may, at times, compromise the economic and social benefits of fisheries; however we emphasise our view that for fishery management to continue to progress, any new management system must have at its core the key principle of sustainable management of Scotland's native fish stocks. The economic and social benefits will be a natural consequence of well-managed fisheries.

Key points

- Whilst we recognise that more work will be required to develop some aspects, we welcome the principle recommendations of Andrew Thin's review.
- We welcome the principle of management being underpinned by a sound basis of evidence and delivered through national strategy and regional fishery management plans.
- We recognise the importance of developing and promoting sustainable fisheries for the benefit of Scotland. We would also support initiatives to encourage access to fishing and wider participation in angling.
- We agree with the model of locally empowered regional fishery management organisations as the delivery mechanisms for management.
- We agree with the need for an effective national body to coordinate and support the regional organisations.
- We support the principle of licensing to regulate the exploitation of salmon stocks and would suggest that the precautionary principle, **applied proportionately**, should be used until adequate conservation limits can be established.
- We would like to see a clear focusing of research to provide a sound evidence basis for fishery management decisions and would like to see coordination of Scottish Government agencies, regional management organisations and university departments to achieve this.
- We agree with the need for ongoing training underpinned by a CPD mechanism for staff throughout the sector.