



Next steps for UK fisheries - trade, opportunities, policy, sustainability and support

21 February 2023



Institute of Fisheries Management

Dedicated to professional and sustainable fisheries management

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Priorities for change for fisheries management in the UK

- Value and importance of fisheries
- Marine environment
- Freshwater environment
- Estuarine
- Challenges and solutions
- Common issues



Aim:

To identify the biggest issues facing fisheries management in the UK today and to influence you to take the necessary actions

Importance of the fisheries sector

Participation and value

Sector	Participation	Key Facts	Value	
Sea fishing *1	12,000 fishers 5911 vessels [+ Processing]	Landings 622,000 t Exports 452,000 t [Imports 721,000 t]	£990M £2004M [£3457M]	
Sea Angling *2	823,000 anglers 16,300 jobs	10 million fish kept	£1936M	
Aquaculture *3	Salmon Other	1898 jobs 1333 jobs	175,000 t 31,000 t	£550M £49M
Freshwater fishing	600 fishers	Mostly eels 400 t	£5M	
Freshwater angling *4	1.2 million anglers	35,000 jobs	£2000M	
Total	12,600 fishers 2 million anglers	828,400 tonnes 66,500 jobs	£7,534 M 50% angling	

Sources

1. [Marine Management Organisation 2019](#)
2. [Cefas 2020](#)
3. [Cefas 2012](#)
4. Extrapolated from [Environment Agency 2018](#)

The marine environment

Challenges	Solutions
Joint Fisheries Statement & Fishery Management Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Greater commitment and robustness from Defra / MMO – e.g. VMS
Ecosystem approach to management	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Defra / MMO to implement 'Essential Fish Habitat'
Post-Brexit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Rebalance quotas according to sustainability levels advised by science
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mitigate by adopting essential fish habitatAdapt to changing fish stocks



The freshwater environment - challenges

Atlantic salmon - King of Fish



Salmon Stocks and Fisheries in England and Wales in 2021

Cefas, EA, NRW

Salmon Stocks and Fisheries in England and Wales, 2021

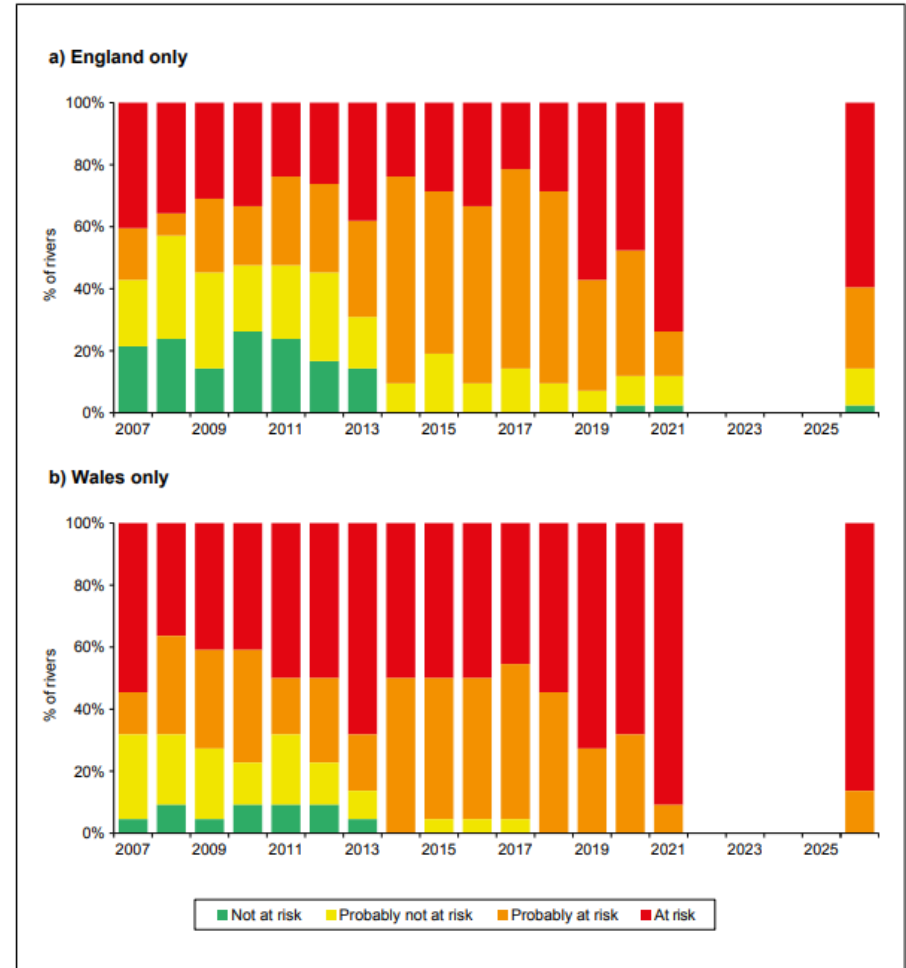


Figure 33. Percentage of principal salmon rivers in each risk category, assessed against the management objective, for 2007-2021, and as projected for 2026 for rivers in (a) England and (b) Wales.

The freshwater environment - challenges



Pollution in freshwater ecosystems includes pathogens from human and animal waste, nutrients from wastewater and agriculture, organic matter from agricultural run-off, and chemical pollution from pesticides and runoff from mines. For example, the drivers behind freshwater pollution include:

1. SEWAGE AND STORM OVERFLOWS

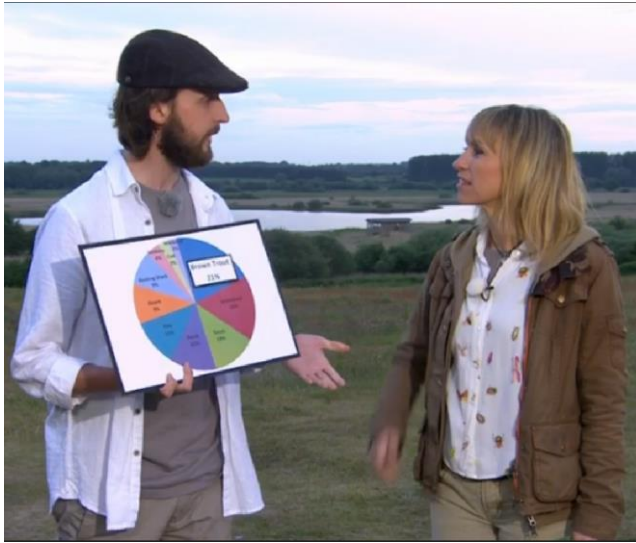
Water companies require permits to discharge untreated sewage into the local environment, which is allowed under certain exceptional criteria. However, recent monitoring has exposed the alarming rate that sewage is being discharged into our rivers. In 2020, water companies in England discharged raw sewage into rivers 400,000 times, and over 100,000 times in Wales. Even under normal use, sewage systems from small septic tanks and major sewage works contribute nutrients in the form of nitrogen and phosphorus.



400,000
SEWAGE DISCHARGES IN 2020



The freshwater environment - challenges



"I've been filming in Britain's rivers for the last 10 years and in that short period I've noticed a striking decline in water quality, rivers that were once clear, full of fish and plant life are now little more than mucky drains".

Jack Perks.

Govt. Environmental Audit Committee 2022:
"Water quality in rivers is not good enough".

Water Framework Directive Good Ecological Status
England Water Bodies:
2009: **25%** → 2020: **16%**

The freshwater environment - solutions

Challenges	Solutions
Salmon decline (and other fish species)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Enforce current anti-pollution legislation▪ Don't water down legislation, e.g. REUL▪ Commit to Climate Change goals▪ Apply mitigation for climate change▪ Plant trees for increased shading on southern banks▪ Improve habitat quality and migration
Unco-ordinated approach in Govt.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Join up Agriculture and Fisheries policies▪ Defra to improve communication and accountability
Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Enforce current anti-pollution legislation▪ Don't water down legislation, eg REUL – Water Framework Directive, Habitats Regulations, SAC rivers failing
Over-abstraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Enforce current water resources legislation▪ Don't water down legislation, eg REUL - Water Framework Directive, Habitats Regulations▪ Greater investment in water efficiency and leakage control
Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Commit to Climate Change goals▪ Apply mitigation for climate change

The estuarine environment

Challenges	Solutions
Development pressures, e.g. Power Stations, Tidal Lagoons, Barrages, Dredging, Deposits, Navigation locks,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Remember estuaries are important as nursery areas for cod, bass; home to sensitive and rare species; highways for vulnerable migratory fish
Lack of knowledge and understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better education, e.g. Citizen Science, Environmental Impact Assessments
Loopholes in legislation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Close those loopholesMore robust legal defence and challenge



Fisheries management & the profession

- ifm IFM membership body for fisheries managers. 20 years:
- ifm Dilution of fisheries management profession
- ifm Govt. & agencies: Reduced numbers, increased multifunctional
- ifm Third sector increased, consultancies increased
- ifm Generalism the norm
- ifm Regulators chronically underfunded
- ifm Impacting on proper regulation, fisheries science, environment
- ifm If Govt. is serious about its 25 YEP and Natural Capital, must invest in human expertise



Summary & key messages



- **Climate change:** Commit to national actions
- **Legislation:** Retain and enforce for protection and improvement
- **Resources and priorities:** rebalance for environment
- Experience shows: **best fisheries & environmental management = best outcomes for fish, wildlife, people and economy**
- **There is hope:** Resources, partnerships and concerted action



Thank you for listening



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