

Is-adran Physgodfeydd Fisheries Division



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

David Bunt, FIFM, C.Env.
Chief Executive
IFM

Via email:
david.bunt@ifm.org.uk

14 June 2023

Dear Mr Bunt,

Thank you for your letter of 4 May, addressed to Lesley Griffiths MS, Minister for Rural Affairs and North Wales, and Trefnydd, and subsequent email to Julie James, Minister for Climate Change. I have been asked to reply on this occasion, I apologise for the delay in responding to you.

Firstly, we share your concerns about the plight of wild Atlantic salmon in our rivers. It is clear with fisheries management measures already in place across Wales, wider action is needed to restore salmon populations and increase climate resilience.

As you will be aware Natural Resources Wales are responsible for the management of salmon, sea trout and other freshwater and migratory species in Welsh rivers, and we work closely with colleagues in NRW. In recognition of the wider actions which are needed, the Minister for Rural Affairs asked Natural Resources Wales to develop a salmon and sea trout action plan for Wales, setting out the actions NRW would take beyond fisheries management to address the decline in migratory finfish species. We continue to work with NRW on the delivery of this plan.

Healthy salmon populations require healthy rivers. As you will have heard during the recent short debate, protecting, and enhancing our water environment is a priority of this government. Our Programme for Government commits us to improving water quality by beginning to designate inland waters for recreation and strengthening river water quality monitoring.

We have committed to provide over £40 million of additional funding between 2022-23 and 2024-25 to address water quality problems across Wales, including funding for nutrient management boards established to address SAC river catchment challenges. This is in addition to water quality improvements made to date, including the removal of barriers to fish migration and remediating metal mines across Welsh rivers.

We have already taken a number of steps to tackle discharges from overflows. This includes making sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) mandatory on almost all new building developments. This will help relieve pressure on the network by redirecting and

slowing down the speed at which surface water enters the sewer system. It will help ensure storm overflows are only used as a last resort.

We are working to tackle the many reasons for river pollution in Wales, from agricultural pollution where we have introduced new regulations to help manage nutrients and also continue to provide financial support to tackling the issue of abandoned mines.

There are 1,300 abandoned metal mines in Wales and with Welsh Government support, Wales is at the forefront of developing innovative solutions to tackle these significant legacy issues and we are hosting the International Minewater Association Conference this Summer to showcase these solutions.

Reducing impacts from storm overflows is a priority. We need a cross sectoral, holistic approach to achieve this. We are focusing on sustainable, nature based, solutions to divert as much surface water as possible away from the sewerage systems.

Funding has also been provided through the nature networks fund to restore freshwater biodiversity in the river Lrfon and the river Thaw, with support from the National Lottery and NRW.

The decline in wild Atlantic salmon is of course not just an issue here in Wales. We work closely with Defra and the Devolved Administrations to address key issues at UK level and are active members of the UK delegation to North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO). As such, we are committed to furthering the NASCOs objectives, and look forward working with the other parties and accredited NGOs (including IFM) as part of the Working Group on the Future of NASCO as established at the annual meeting in Moncton Canada.

Should you wish to discuss anything further please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RFloyd', written in a cursive style.

Robert Floyd
Pennaeth Polisi Dyframaethu, Dŵr Croyw a Physgodfeydd Mudol
Head of Aquaculture, Freshwater & Migratory Fisheries Policy