

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
NRW 2015 13
Natural Resources Wales – Annual Scrutiny 2015
Response from David Allott

Dear Madam or Sir,

I don't represent any clubs, organisations or pressure groups, my opinions written here are my own. I enjoy angling and have joined several clubs that allow me to fish Welsh rivers. My reason for joining these clubs is to access sea trout (sewin) and salmon fishing in beautiful surroundings.

Although my licences/permits allow me to fish stretches on the Dee, Dovey, Towy and many more Welsh rivers, I have a particular affection for the Teifi. I joined the Llandysul Angling Association in the year 2000 and since then I have caught sewin and at least one salmon each year until last year and despite making four or five trips down from 'Gods own Country', Yorkshire a round trip of 400 miles - I didn't catch one fish.

In the past fifteen years I have seen: a sad decline in the number of fish caught by me and other anglers on the river. Insect populations of upwinged and other waterborne insects have declined. More litter and inappropriate material such as building waste has appeared in the river or on the river bank. Canoeists and rafters (who don't pay licence fees) have spoilt my leisure experience in pursuit of theirs. (When I first joined, canoeists restricted their activities to well defined parts of the river and made the most of the closed season for angling.) Fish eating birds such as cormorants and sawbills are more frequently seen preying the river. The fish recruitment programme stopped and abstraction of water seems to have increased. And in that time I have only had my Environment Agency Salmon and Migratory licence checked once.

I would like to see:

1. Tighter regulation of fishing nets in Welsh coastal waters and estuaries
2. Greater limitations put on coracle nets (i.e. only allowing the use of them for fewer days of the week than at present)
3. Closed season dates for fishing that are the same for net licence holders as there is for rod anglers
4. A complete ban on using pesticides/insecticides such as cypermethrin and a severe restrictions on the use of herbicide within 20 metres of rivers.
5. Salmon hatcheries to be reopened
6. Heavy fines/jail sentences imposed if offenders dump inappropriate objects in the river or cause pollution.
7. Resolution of the conflict caused by leisure usage of rivers (i.e. wild swimmers, canoeists/rafters and anglers)

8. Less bank erosion/damage caused by cattle as they go to drink from the river. (I do appreciate the work already done to ameliorate this problem.)

I have tried to play my part by: limiting the taking of fish and carefully returning the vast majority I have caught, written or phoned the Environment Agency and Club if I have seen evidence of bad practice or suggested ways to improve the fishery, written pointing out my views regarding hydro-electric planning, picked up litter that has been carelessly dropped on my beloved beats, encouraged friends and family to join me fishing and enjoying the environment and contributed to the rural economy of Wales by staying in hotels, shopping for food and drink and supporting local fishing clubs plus always being in possession of a full licence.

How are you going to play your part before the time when 'you don't know what you've got 'til it's gone'?

Yours sincerely,

David Allott