

National Assembly for Wales
Environment and Sustainability Committee
NRW 2015 – 69
Natural Resources Wales – Annual Scrutiny 2015
Response from Ammanford and District Angling Association

Ammanford & District Angling Association.



Dear Sir / Madam,

1. As all other key stakeholder, we are grateful for the opportunity to comment on the performance of Natural Resources Wales (NRW). Our committee appreciate your engagement with us as “partners”
2. Declining fish stocks is a big concern to all of our members and most anglers who fish the Loughor and Amman catchment. These days, most of the anglers along the river are conservation minded with many practicing voluntary catch and release.
3. There is an improved awareness amongst members of the need to return most fish and we as an angling association have gone far beyond what we may reasonably be expected to do to help sustain our fish stocks. We now hope and expect to NRW to show the same level of commitment. We have recently introduced rules to our club:
 - Mandatory catch and release of Sewin as from 1st September inclusive
 - Use of one hook (single, double or treble) on any fly or lure as from 1st September inclusive, e.g. one treble hook on Rapala's, no flying trebles on flies, etc. This is to enable easier release of fish during the C&R period
 - Daily catch limit of 2 Sewin per 24 hour period from the start of the season up until the C&R period of September 1st. Salmon catch limits to match those of NRW. Once 2 Sewin have been killed, angler must cease fishing for that 24 hour period.
 - We encourage release of all big Sewin (over approx 6lbs)
4. Last season, we set up a group which includes all angling clubs which have fishing rights on the Loughor and Amman. These include ourselves, Pontarddulais Angling, Gwaun Cae Gurwen and Clwb Godre'r Mynydd Du. It was our intention that all of these clubs would recommend the same rules to their members at AGM so that all anglers fishing the Loughor and Amman abide by the same rules. Again, we as a group expect support from NRW to support the cause in actions on the ground rather than just words.
5. We have worked with Carmarthenshire Rivers Trust to undertake fly life monitoring as well as identify areas of our tributaries which need clearance / improvement work to help fly life and remove obstacles to assist with the upstream migration of salmon and sewin.
6. There is a significant risk that smaller angling clubs like us will struggle to survive if fish stocks continue to fall and as a result membership will diminish
7. There is very little NRW bailiff presence on the river Loughor at present and reduced angling effort will reduce the activity of self-policing even further.
8. The numbers of fish caught reported to NRW via licence catch returns are far less that returns to each association on the river catchment. This is either because anglers fish with no licence at all, or more than likely fish with a non migratory trout licence and therefore have no need to return catch numbers to NRW. The lack of bailiff presence for many years has made this an easy option. As a result our river could have potentially be places on an “at risk” category, which in fact is not the case.
9. We have suffered a couple of pollution incidents on our tributaries in the last 12 months, one with a confirmed fish kill of 200+ fish and the other, a severe discolouration of a stream over a

8 month period which has potentially clogged and destroyed redds and suffocated fly life due to the large amount of sediment settling on the riverbed. This is allegedly as a result of a nearby development. The fish kill was reported and prosecution is apparently imminent. The discoloration is still ongoing and we believe it will kill the river for the next few years. This has been reported to NRW but the issue continues, to our dismay.

10. **As all other key stakeholders, we would like to see the Government and N.R.W. to deal with**

- Create a Marine Conservation area within Swansea and Carmarthen Bay and cease all netting activity legal and illegal within that area.
 - Suspend commercial netting (coracle and Seine nets) until such time as there is a significant improvement in fish numbers.
 - Support a larger licensed cull of fish eating birds (cormorants and goosanders) There are many more of these birds being sighted on our river system in recent years. They are no doubt having a significant impact on our native and migratory fish stocks-
 - Co-operate with the police and other key authorities to proactively and openly prosecute illegal netting within Swansea and Carmarthen Bay.
 - Prosecute all instances where agricultural or commercial practices are detrimental to the health of our river systems.
 - There are so many economic and social reasons for ensuring that our rivers are looked after for all to enjoy. We believe that NRW has a vital lead role to play here we as anglers are looking to them to manage our natural resources wisely and effectively.
11. Many of us are very worried and frustrated with the recent and current situation; we want the decline to stop. There is still time to put things right! These problems are not insurmountable if we all work in partnership Most of us anglers are eager to help, but we need NRW to take hold of the decision with a bit more steel than is currently being

Kind regards.
Barry Hale
Hon. Secretary
Ammanford and District Angling Association