



The Scottish Parliament  
Pàrlamaid na h-Alba

## **RURAL AFFAIRS, CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

Aileen McLeod MSP  
Minister for Environment, Climate Change  
and Land Reform

c/o Clerk to the Committee  
Room T3.40  
The Scottish Parliament  
Edinburgh  
EH99 1SP

Tel: (0131) 348 5221

e-mail:

[racce.committee@scottish.parliament.uk](mailto:racce.committee@scottish.parliament.uk)

27 March 2015

Dear Aileen

### **Report of the Wild Fisheries Review Panel**

The Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee has recently taken oral evidence on the Report of the Wild Fisheries Review Panel, and written evidence<sup>1</sup> submitted to the Committee is available on its webpage. The Committee notes the confirmation provided by you at its meeting on 4 March 2015<sup>2</sup> that the Scottish Government plans to bring forward a consultation at Easter 2015 on the broad policy options for a new management structure for wild fisheries, followed by a further consultation on a draft bill by the end of the Parliamentary session.

The Committee believes the issue is one that has already been consulted on heavily over the last few years and asks that the Minister takes steps to ensure matters are moved forward to a resolution without delay.

---

<sup>1</sup> Written submissions available at:

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/CurrentCommittees/86982.aspx>.

<sup>2</sup> Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee. Official Report 4 March 2015,

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=9817&mode=pdf>.

Following our evidence sessions with members of the Review Panel on 18 February 2015<sup>3</sup> and with stakeholders on 25 February 2015<sup>4</sup> the Committee recommends that the following points be included in the forthcoming consultation.

### ***Balance between national leadership and local delivery***

We believe the relationship between a new national unit and local Fishery Management Organisations is important to the future of wild fisheries and the consultation should seek views on how best to agree and establish the correct balance between national accountability and strategy and local empowerment and delivery.

### ***Resourcing***

We heard evidence that wild fisheries management is currently under resourced and we believe that this, and how nationally and locally raised funds are reallocated and used, are matters which must be consulted on. In particular we heard concerns from stakeholders on the impact the reallocation of resources may have on existing river management bodies. The Committee notes the recommendation in the Report regarding the possible introduction of a national rod licence scheme as a dedicated source of funding for an Angling for All Programme. We also heard from stakeholders that there are differing, often contentious, views on this issue and we recommend further consultation is undertaken in this area to ascertain the most appropriate use of funds raised from a national rod licence scheme.

### ***Sustainable harvesting***

The Committee welcomes the current Scottish Government consultation on a proposed ban on the killing of salmon except under licence. We believe that how this will be complied with should also be consulted on. The Committee notes that conflict exists between stakeholders on the best way to achieve sustainable harvesting and agrees this must be addressed in the consultation.

The Committee heard that the management of mixed-stock fisheries presents complexities for the management of salmon populations, notes that the Review has proposed the adoption of a precautionary approach when licence applications are being considered and recommends that this is also included in the forthcoming consultation.

### ***Scientific information***

The Committee agrees any decisions in relation to the management of wild fisheries should be taken on the basis of sound scientific evidence and the consultation should seek views on how we can obtain the best scientific evidence available, and where responsibility should lie for co-ordinating and undertaking scientific research. Again, the Committee believes it is vital that the right balance is struck between research to inform national priorities, while retaining capacity to research local issues and inform management decisions at local level.

---

<sup>3</sup> Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee. Official Report 18 February 2015,

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=9783&mode=pdf>.

<sup>4</sup> Scottish Parliament Rural Affairs, Climate Change and Environment Committee. Official Report 25 February 2015

<http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/parliamentarybusiness/28862.aspx?r=9801&mode=pdf>.

### **Regulation and compliance**

Stakeholders identified a number of concerns with the current system of protection orders and the role of water bailiffs. The Committee believes the forthcoming consultation provides an opportunity to ensure that proper accountability, scrutiny, appeal and complaints processes are built into these areas.

### **Public Petition PE01547 on conserving Scottish Wild Salmon**

At its meeting on 10 March 2015 the Committee agreed to ask you to consider the points raised in the petition as part of the on-going work to take forward the recommendations of the wild fisheries review panel. The petition is calling for the Scottish Government to—

*(i) in the interests of salmon conservation, and on a precautionary basis, to request Scottish Ministers to use their powers immediately under the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 2003 Act to ensure that no Atlantic salmon are killed in Scotland for a period of five years from 2015 if possible, by 2016 if not - by either nets or rods - before 1st July; and*

*(ii) in the case of fishing for salmon by coastal netting, to take such steps as are necessary to bring to an end the exploitation of wild salmon by Mixed Stock Fisheries at any time of year, in line with Scotland's international commitments and obligations.*

As I set out earlier in my letter the Committee strongly agrees it is vital that changes to the management of wild fisheries are made sooner rather than later. As the eventual implementation of the provisions of the forthcoming bill are now likely to be some time away we urge you to take interim steps, perhaps by way of secondary legislation, to ensure that our stocks of wild salmon, trout and other species along with the relationships between the different stakeholder groups do not suffer further.

Yours sincerely



Rob Gibson MSP  
Convener