

3 April 2014

Paper Title	A consultation on Natural Resources Wales' salmon stocking, third party salmon stocking and the future of Natural Resources Wales' hatcheries
Paper Reference:	NRW B O 26.14
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Purpose of Paper:	Information
Recommendation:	To note the background, actions to date and next steps for the review and consultation on Natural Resources Wales' salmon stocking, third party salmon stocking and the future of Natural Resources Wales' hatcheries .
Decision Required:	The Board is asked to endorse the next steps and to inform contacts as appropriate about the review and encourage responses to the consultation.

Impact: To note – all headings might not be applicable to the topic	Impact on the Environment: Fish require good water quality and availability and are a key indicator of ecological performance and environmental quality. Impact on the Economy: Wales' fisheries have an important role in providing jobs and income in commercial and recreational fishing, fisheries management and tourism. Impact on Community: Fish can play an important role in engaging people in their environment, education and providing opportunities for recreation and associated health benefits. Impact on Knowledge: We need a strong evidence base to inform our advice to Welsh Government on fisheries policy, to inform Natural Resources Wales' decision making on fisheries management and to inform discussions with partners and co-deliverers.
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Issue

1. This paper sets out the background, actions to date and next steps for the review and consultation on Natural Resources Wales' salmon stocking, third party salmon stocking and the future of Natural Resources Wales' hatcheries

Background

2. As a new organisation, Natural Resources Wales is reviewing many aspects of the work we do to make sure they are as effective as possible in delivering for people, the economy and the environment. One programme of this work is the 'Agenda for Change' which looks at how Natural Resources Wales works with partners towards achieving sustainable inland fisheries for Wales as discussed at the Board in December
3. As part of this we are considering all of our fisheries activities. This included a review of our own existing salmon stocking activity and associated hatchery operations.

The Review

4. Natural Resources Wales inherited four fish hatchery units from one of its predecessor bodies, the Environment Agency. Two of those hatchery units are currently not operational (Mawddach, which is temporarily mothballed pending this review, and Clywedog which was mothballed 12 months ago) and two are operational (Cynrig and Maerdy). The two operational hatcheries are primarily used for the production of salmon to be stocked into various rivers throughout Wales, including the cross border rivers of the Dee and the Wye.
5. In the review we are considering the rationale, justification and implications of Natural Resources Wales's activities in rearing and stocking salmon into Welsh rivers, the implications of our considerations for others wanting to do this, and our own capacity in this work.
6. Whilst the Executive Team have accepted the recommendations of the review the public consultation will assist us to make a final decision

The consultation

7. On Tuesday 4th March, Natural Resources Wales launched a 12 week, public consultation, that will close on 27th May 2014. The review and consultation documents are available on the Natural Resources Wales' website.
<http://naturalresourceswales.gov.uk/our-work/consultations/our-own-consultations/consultation-nrw-salmon-stocking-hatcheries/?lang=cy>
A dedicated mailbox has been set up to receive consultation responses and there is also the option to respond in writing.
8. We are seeking views on the recommendations and welcome evidence to support comments in the consultation responses.
9. The Review document, bibliography and consultation document lists the papers, journals and operational practices we have considered in reaching the recommendations in the review. We have used the most up-to date evidence base known to us. If new evidence becomes available during the consultation period we will use this to inform our final decision.

Next Steps

10. A press release was issued on the first day of the consultation. Following this we were approached by BBC Radio Cymru and the BBC Wales "Country Focus" for interviews. Articles have also appeared in Western Mail, Daily Post and BBC Online. We have also sent the press release to specialist journalists and publications and we expect the story to be picked up and we will monitor these publications, as well as weekly editions of local papers, to ensure that we have secured coverage across our key stakeholder audiences.
11. We have provided key staff with a bi-lingual email message, including the web-link, to encourage contacts and stakeholders to read the review and respond to the consultation.
12. We have developed a set of 'frequently asked questions' to support management of enquiries. The 'frequently asked questions' will be updated to reflect enquiries received during the consultation.
13. Our operational teams have arranged Local Fishery Group meetings during the consultation to proactively share our evidence and rationale. Our communications team will continue to provide support material to ensure we deliver a consistent message to our stakeholders across Wales.

14. A Task and Finish group will assess responses as they are received during the consultation period. A summary of the responses will be available on our website following the end of the consultation.
15. A final decision on the future of Natural Resources Wales' salmon stocking activity, and the future of our hatcheries must be taken before September 2014. In advance of any brood-stock collection for the 2014/15 season.
16. Following analysis of the responses we will present a final review and recommendations to the Executive Team.
17. A paper will be prepared for the Natural Resources Wales Board meeting in July. The decision of the Board will be communicated
18. We have set up a group to assess the feasibility of adapting the Cynig site for freshwater and fisheries research. The group will investigate the potential for partnerships with Welsh academic institutions or other research bodies for developing and funding work at Cynig.
19. Depending on the outcome of the consultation and the subsequent decision of the board, we will work with stakeholders to develop a realistic and practical timetable for bringing all third party salmon stoking to an end.

Risks

20. We need to ensure we have the best evidence base to decide the final outcome of the review.
21. We need to explain the decision and the evidence used to reach our decision.
22. We need manage the new steps resulting for the decision.

Financial Justifications

23. Ensuring that our resources are deployed to achieve the best environmental outcomes.

Equality impact assessment (EqIA)

N/A