



Association of Salmon Fishery Boards

Capital Business Centre, 24 Canning Street, Edinburgh, EH3 8EG
Tel: 0131 272 2797 | www.asfb.org.uk

6th March 2012

Stewart Stevenson, MSP
Minister for the Environment and Climate Change
Scottish Parliament
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

North East England Review of the Net Limitation Order

Dear Mr Stevenson,

Please find attached a letter to Richard Benyon MP regarding the forthcoming review of the Net Limitation Order for salmon netting in North East England, and our submission to the Environment Agency on this issue. As you will see, we have recommended that the Net Limitation Order, which will eventually see the drift net fishery phased out, should also be extended to the T and J nets operating in that region. Subsequent to these submissions we have learned that genetic studies have confirmed that the North East England fisheries are indeed mixed stock fisheries. Marine Scotland Science, in partnership with the Environment Agency, have found that 70-75% of the salmon caught in the drift net fishery and 35-50% of the salmon caught in the T&J nets are of Scottish origin.

There are also salmon net fisheries in English waters (north of Holy Island) which are under the jurisdiction of Scottish Ministers, being within the Tweed District regulated by The Scotland Act 1998 (River Tweed) Order 2006. Although genetic tests have not been undertaken, these fish will certainly also be of Scottish origin.

Under English law, the North East nets are not allowed to commence netting until June. As I am sure you are aware, a voluntary code promoted by the Salmon Net Fishing Association of Scotland, recommends that nets in Scotland do not operate before 1 April, which confers some degree of protection on fragile stocks of early running spring salmon. However, in the Tweed District, the nets currently operate from 15th February as they are permitted to do by the Tweed Regulation Order, which is under the jurisdiction of Scottish Ministers. ASFB believe that a coordinated and similar response between the Scottish and UK Governments is the most appropriate means of ensuring the conservation of the fragile spring stock of our iconic Atlantic salmon populations.

I would very much welcome the opportunity to meet with you to further discuss this issue, and other issues of importance to the wild fisheries sector arising from the recent consultation on the Aquaculture and Fisheries Bill.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Alan Wells
Policy & Planning Director