



# What do wild salmon mean to me?

## Faye Jackson



I am a data analyst within the Environment Group at Marine Scotland Science Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory (MSS-FFL). In 2017, I completed my PhD with MSS-FFL and the University of Birmingham, funded by a NERC Open-CASE studentship. My thesis focused on understanding and predicting river temperature to inform the management of salmon rivers.

I have always been interested in the natural environment and especially in rivers. My undergraduate dissertation focused on understanding how different water sources (e.g. glacial, groundwater, surface water) influenced river temperatures in the Taillon-Gabiétous catchment in the French Pyrenees. Following this I became particularly interested in river temperature, how it varies over time (days, seasons and years), depending on where you are (reach, catchment, and national) and how it influences freshwater biology.

River temperature is important for cold-water adapted fish species like Atlantic salmon, affecting their growth, production and survival. There are increasing concerns that rising river temperatures could have detrimental effects on fish populations. However, despite my interest in river temperature, before arriving at the Marine Scotland Science Freshwater Fisheries Laboratory (MSS-FFL), to begin my PhD, I had never seen a wild salmon.

Now, I have been lucky to see both juvenile and adult salmon in their natural habitat in different

areas of Scotland. I will never forget the first time I witnessed adult salmon spawning in the upper Brora catchment whilst out on fieldwork. Since then I have worked on a wide range of projects, with many different people, to improve our understanding of salmon population dynamics, habitat and physio-chemical characteristics of rivers (e.g. temperature, water quality). Under climate change I believe this work is even more important, to underpin evidence-based management of the freshwater environment and protect iconic fish like salmon.

If you had asked me 10 years ago, when I was finishing school in Shropshire, where a career in environmental science was going to take me I wouldn't have predicted where I have ended up. I feel privileged to have a research role where I can continue to learn about salmon, their environment and the management and conservation opportunities available.

Discover more about the importance of wild Atlantic salmon at:  
[www.fms.scot/what-do-wild-salmon-mean-to-me/](http://www.fms.scot/what-do-wild-salmon-mean-to-me/)  
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