



## What do wild salmon mean to me?

### Karl Ferguson



I am currently the Head Fishery Officer for the River Tweed Commission. I have previously worked in the Salmon Farming industry and as a Gamekeeper/Stalker on two large commercial estates. I am a passionate fly fisherman and fly tyer and love searching for wild fish in remote places.

In July 2016 I made the difficult decision to change career as it had always been an ambition to work on the River Tweed. My motivation to change direction was the belief that I could play some part - even if this was in a small way - to protect the Tweed System and the fish within it. The past three years have been a complete eye opener: Salmon stocks have continued to decline throughout the country having a knock-on effect - not just on angling but also the wider communities which rely on the business that healthy Salmon numbers bring. The world is now ruled by social media, where everyone is an 'expert' and each have their own theories and solutions to the declining stocks be it pollution, predation, global warming, or the management of our rivers. Agreement is difficult to reach on any of these factors and, in truth, each will be playing its part in some way. Every regulatory body has a different agenda and trying to find solution to factors that we may be able to influence becomes embroiled in long and tedious paper trails with relentless meetings, rarely leading to favourable outcomes - especially if you are a Salmon! One of the saddest

and most shocking things I have encountered since becoming a Fishery Officer is experiencing the level of abuse and criticism which is directed at the people on the ground who work extremely hard, on tight budgets and with limited resources to do the best for this river. If we are to ensure that future generations are to enjoy Salmon returning to our rivers, then we must all work together and put a stop to the blame culture which ultimately achieves nothing.



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/)  
[#wildsalmonmatter](https://twitter.com/wildsalmonmatter)

