



What do wild salmon mean to me?

Richard Davies



Richard is Chairman of the Outer Hebrides Fisheries Trust. He is a graduate in rural resource management, specialising in salmonid habitat management. Having previously worked in fisheries and now a keen natural history film maker, aerial photographer and businessman, he is bringing up a family on the West Coast of Lewis.

Wild Atlantic Salmon captivated my imagination from a young age when I attempted to catch them in the South Wales rivers of my childhood. They were the elusive pinnacle of my young hunting ambition. Now, in middle age, I am as captivated as I have ever been, but with their story and lives rather than capturing them. I altered my planned career as an engineer and moved from Wales to Scotland to work in protecting them as a nineteen-year-old. 28 years later, I am still here doing what little I can to help, studying and recording their behaviour for the pure joy of getting a closer look and better understanding. It is their indefatigable character that I think resonates with so many and makes us better people for being near them.

Humans have celebrated and depended upon the diverse and extraordinary life cycles of salmon for centuries. Celebrated in art, culture and law, contributing hugely to the landscape and even land-based ecosystems, the wild salmon is a truly magnificent keystone species. They are also a barometer of how we treat the environment and how we place ourselves in global ecosystems. Unsurpris-

ingly, my heart is slightly heavy as a result of the current state of affairs. The wild salmon knows nothing of political and geographic boundaries and critically, has no voice of its own and that is where we come in. We cannot let a myriad of political choices' unintended and sometimes-intended consequences damn another species.

My entire adult life would not be the same and my children would not exist if it were not for salmon. It's extraordinary to think about it in this context, but it is true. The Atlantic Salmon changed my life.



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

