

January 2023.

Dear all,

Thank you again to everyone who attended the first Salmon and Sea trout Species Champions event in Cardiff last October. This was the first of what we hope will be a series of meetings to highlight the catastrophic decline in our salmon and sewin stocks and to take action in order to prevent their numbers from falling to irretrievably low levels.

Following the meeting, we wrote to Huw Irranca-Davies (Salmon champion) and Cefin Campbell (Sewin Champion) to ask them to take the issue forward in a number of ways.

Firstly, they were asked to write to the Chair and Chief Executive of NRW requesting that resources are made available to carry out a rapid analysis of existing stock data to identify the most critical factors impacting on migratory salmonid freshwater survival. This would enable NRW to adapt their Salmon and Sea Trout Plan accordingly and to focus it on measures that would have the quickest and greatest impact on reversing the decline of stocks.

Correspondence has taken place between the Species Champions and NRW and our understanding is that the data review is now being progressed by NRW.

In addition, Afonydd Cymru has also commenced a review of WFD fish classification data to understand how this relates to our own fisheries habitat survey data for rivers and to see if we can further develop a prioritised plan for river restoration which will specifically aid the freshwater survival of migratory salmonids. We will also work with NRW to analyse current WFD data for fisheries to understand Reasons for Not Achieving Good status and determine whether further work can be done on the WFD programme. This work is funded by NRW under the Strategic Allocation Fund from WG.

Looking further ahead, we now have a second event planned for June this year in combination with the Salmon School, when the glass salmon sculptures which were a feature of COP26 will be transported from Scotland to the Senedd. This will provide a further opportunity for raising awareness of the parlous state of our salmon stocks and an update on progress particularly around NRW's further stock assessment work to determine the most critical factors affecting salmon and sea trout freshwater survival.

Lastly, the IFM is organising a sea trout conference in Cardiff for September. During the last twenty years there has been considerable research into the biology, genetics and behaviour of this species. This event will look at sea trout across the British Isles and will be focussed on how we can turn our increased understanding about them into how we manage this species and its environment going forward.

In the meantime, our Species Champions will continue to press for improvements both in terms of water quality and quantity in our rivers and for NRW to ensure compliance by Land Managers with all environmental legislation in order to prevent pollution and improve land management.

We remain very grateful for the time and commitment our Species Champions are devoting to this cause and will be in touch again soon with the details of the second Species Champion event to be held in June.

**Chris Mills** (Sewin Species Champion Sponsor)

**Richard Garner Williams** (Salmon Species Champion Sponsor)