

WATER RESOURCES ACT 1991

THE WALES ROD AND LINE (SALMON AND SEA TROUT) BYELAWS 2017

THE WALES NET FISHING (SALMON AND SEA TROUT) BYELAWS 2017

DOCUMENT NRW/1R/A

APPENDIX TO THE REBUTTAL PROOF OF EVIDENCE

OF

PETER GOUGH

PRINCIPAL ADVISOR FISHERIES

On behalf of

NATURAL RESOURCES WALES

JANUARY 2019



Frustration over failure to introduce stock scheme

SPORTING anglers along the River Teifi are 'exasperated and frustrated' that environmental chiefs have failed to introduce a catch-and-release scheme to protect salmon stocks.

That is the view of experienced Cilgerran-based river guide Harry Jackson who feels such measures are urgently required to halt the diminishing numbers of the fish.

"This time last year we thought Natural Resources Wales were about to bring in a catch-and-release scheme," he told the *Cambrian News*. "Yet nothing has happened – all they are doing is kicking the can down the road in an effort to try and keep everyone happy."

"I'm concerned about the impact this will have on the tourist trade which brings an enormous amount of money into the west Wales economy."

"Yet those tourists simply will not come if there are no salmon to catch – and that's what is going to happen

by Mike Lewis
mike@cambrian-news.co.uk

if stocks continue to go down."

Mr Jackson was reacting to the news that NRW are bringing in emergency byelaws to replace National Salmon Byelaws, in place for 20 years to protect early-running spring salmon, which expire on 31 December.

NRW say the new emergency byelaws will replicate the current level of protection for salmon stocks until a decision is made by Welsh Government following the Local Inquiry on NRW's application for the introduction of more protective catch controls.

"It was our intention that the new catch control byelaws would be in place by now to protect salmon and sea trout stocks, however that hasn't happened and the expiry of the current National Salmon Byel-

aws would lead to less protection for early-running salmon," said Peter Gough, NRW's principal fisheries advisor.

"The levels of protection for both salmon and sea trout in 2019, as things are, would be some way below that which we deem necessary and there can be no certainty when new catch control byelaws may be introduced. This places stocks at further risk.

"To combat this, we are implementing emergency byelaws which will maintain the current level of protection of our salmon stocks and retain some protection for sea trout.

"The salmon and Welsh sea trout are truly iconic fish. The very poor state of most salmon and many sea trout stocks in Wales, and how this might be addressed, has been the subject of much debate over the last three years.

"Our new catch control byelaw proposals are based mainly on man-

datory catch-and-release fishing for salmon, amendments to netting seasons and method controls designed to ensure the majority of released fish survive to spawn."

But Mr Jackson said the move amounted to no change.

"To us it's extremely disappointing that NRW can't seem to make a decision," he said.

"There are two factions out on the river: those who fish for sport and those who fish for the table.

"But stocks are so low that unless NRW take control it's going to be a disaster.

"We've been pleading with NRW to introduce catch-and-release for the past five years.

"There's so few salmon around now that it's hardly worth coracle fishermen renewing their salmon licences.

"Instead they're catching sea trout – but before too long the number of sea trout will be down as well."