

**National Assembly for Wales  
Environment and Sustainability Committee  
NRW 2015 – 31  
Natural Resources Wales – Annual Scrutiny 2015  
Response from Dee Fisheries Association**

Dear Sirs,

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the NRW scrutiny.

I am responding as chairman of the Dee Fisheries Association, representing riparian owners, clubs and individual anglers. This association led the successful negotiations and the subsequent fundraising (£354,000) to ensure the adoption of the zero net limitation order and the cessation of Dee estuary netting. We also played a leading role in the huge increase in voluntary “catch and release”.

It is extremely difficult to stress how bitterly disappointed we are with the performance of the NRW.

The reduction in enforcement personnel, the departure of experienced, practical fisheries officers, the scrapping of FERAC, the attempts to reduce the frequency of LFAG meetings could all perhaps, be explained away by cost savings and budget cuts. We have become used to the constant diminution of effort and expenditure over the years since the demise of the NRA and the attempts to push the workload and responsibility on to the various river trusts (which are now struggling for government funding).

All of the above pales when compared with the appalling levels of misinformation, the arrogant dismissal of stakeholder views and the adoption and use of deeply flawed, profoundly biased “studies “ which are being used to close down mitigation hatcheries and worse still-much worse, to prohibit all third party stocking.

We have only recently gained access to the EAW study on hatchery and mitigation stocking which was completed in 2010/11. Charitably, we feel that it must have been withheld from the NRW board prior to their decision. Both studies clearly cannot be correct and we can only conclude that ignoring the earlier EAW work fits well with the almost Messianic zeal with which the hatchery closures and stocking bans were pursued.

In conclusion we feel complete dissatisfaction with NRW and sincerely hope that Ministerial intervention can avert a disaster for our Salmonid fish populations which would affect our heritage for generations.

John Roe.

Chairman Dee Fisheries Association.