

Cabinet Secretary Lesley Griffiths hopes fishing industry 'takes the bait' for International Year of the Salmon to boost conservation efforts

The North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) has launched the initiative in a bid to raise awareness of the climate change challenges salmon faces and showcase the benefits it has to the rural economy.

The outreach campaign is being launched with an England and Wales webpage, www.yearofthesalmon.org, hosted by the Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS).

The webpage will contain all relevant England and Wales salmon information and be updated with events for the wider public to engage with.

Wild Atlantic salmon are one of England and Wales most iconic species, and a vital indicator of healthy aquatic environments, but the fish are in a perilous state in their marine and freshwater environments.

This is because they face many challenges and uncertainties associated with climate change and human activities.

The International Year of the Salmon 2019 aims to engage the public, political representatives and the science community with a view to highlighting these issues.

Fisheries on rivers for salmon and sea trout also provide significant economic and cultural importance to the rural economy in Wales, with angling generating over £150 million for the Welsh economy each year.

Cabinet Secretary for Energy, Planning and Rural Affairs Lesley Griffiths said:

"I wholeheartedly back the International Year of the Salmon and hope the fishing industry 'takes the bait' in efforts to boost its conservation and restoration.

"Angling, whether it is done on an industrial scale or for recreation through licensing for local clubs, is a key part of our rural economy.

"It is important those in the industry give their full backing to this campaign, so we can protect the sustainability of salmon fishing in Wales and further boost the Welsh economy."