

New report finds UK salmon stocks reaching crisis

Wild Atlantic salmon stocks are reaching crisis point the Environment Agency (EA) has said today (Monday 25 July) as the latest stock assessment report estimates they are at their lowest levels on record.

UK rivers are traditional breeding grounds for Atlantic salmon and are classed as an iconic species in our rivers, however, many factors are impacting on their numbers at freshwater and marine sites. In particular, climate change is leading to rising sea and river temperatures and overfishing are impacting on salmon stocks globally. Water quality in rivers and estuaries can also affect the fish lifecycle as well as barriers stopping salmon travelling upstream.

Through the Salmon Five Point Approach action is being taken by the EA and its partners to remove barriers to migration with 19 fish passes improved in the last year. Work is also taking place to improve water quality and reduce the exploitation of salmon by both net and rod fisheries.

Kevin Austin, Deputy Director for Agriculture, Fisheries and the Natural Environment for the Environment Agency said:

Today's assessment for England is of great concern and without urgent action Wild Atlantic Salmon could be lost from our rivers in our lifetimes.

We have seen some real successes through our work with partners, particularly on the river Don and Tyne, but more much progress is needed.

As the climate emergency becomes more acute, we need coordinated action between governments, partners and industry to enable stocks to stabilise and recover to sustainable levels.

The [latest stock assessment report](#), from the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science, the Environment Agency and Natural Resources Wales, is of significant concern. In 2020, 20 salmon rivers (48%) were thought to be 'at risk' – meaning salmon stock are no longer at sustainable levels – but in the latest report this has now risen to 31 (74%) with rivers in the South West, North West and Wales considered to be the most affected.

Only one river in England, the River Tyne, remains within the 'not at risk' category and has improved due to better water quality in the estuary and action against barriers to migration. On the River Don, fish pass improvements and habitat restoration initiatives have enabled salmon to return.

EA Action

In 2019, the EA implemented the closure of salmon net fisheries in England, until at least until 2029, and an overall catch and release rate of 95 per cent in rod fisheries has been achieved through a combination of both voluntary and mandatory controls. Further options are being considered in England to ensure that all remaining rivers categorised as being 'at risk' implement a 100 per cent catch and release rate.

In the last year, the EA has improved 19 fish passages at weirs or barriers across English rivers giving salmon better access to the Severn, Ribble, Camel, Tyne and Test. A new fish pass at Diglis Weir on the River Severn has also been completed as part of the Unlocking the Severn project, restoring 158 miles of river and to aid migration.

To safeguard river flow and improve water quality, the EA has also identified improvements through the Water Industry National Environment Programme. In 2021, 53 schemes were completed that will bring benefits to salmon. 37 of these were on our main salmon rivers and 16 on recovering salmon rivers. 50 new agricultural officers, funded by Defra, have also been appointed to work with the agricultural community to address diffuse and acute water quality issues.

Ensuring clean and plentiful water is one of the biggest challenges we face and is a priority for the EA and the Government. Earlier in July, the EA published its annual [Environmental Performance Assessment](#) on water quality the EA called for tougher fines and prison sentences for those responsible for serious and deliberate pollution affecting water quality.

The EA, Defra and key partner organisations continue to deliver on the Salmon Five Point Approach and NASCO's implementation plan to co-ordinate effort and drive forward actions that will benefit all aspects of the salmon life cycle. To add further weight to this initiative, the EA and NRW have also joined forces to develop the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation (NASCO) salmon management implementation plan to co-ordinate actions to benefit all aspects of the salmon life cycle.

Notes to editor:

All of the Environment Agency's fisheries improvement projects are funded through government Grant in Aid and fishing licence sales.

The Salmon Five Point Approach has been jointly developed and committed to by a wide range of partners which include Government, Atlantic Salmon Trust, Angling Trust, River Trusts, Wild Trout Trust and the Institute of Fisheries Management. It sets out the actions to address the key pressures that affect the different life stages of salmon. The priorities are:

- Improve marine survival.
- Further reduce exploitation by nets and rods.
- Remove barriers to migration and enhance habitat.
- Safeguard sufficient flows.

- Maximise spawning success by improving water quality.
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[The Prime Minister has reappointed three Trustees of the Wallace Collection](#)

Kate de Rothschild-Agius

Kate has been a Trustee of the Wallace Collection since 2018 having served two terms and was appointed Head of Fundraising on the Board in January 2022. Outside of the Wallace, Kate is on the board of Exbury Gardens, her family garden which is open to the public (125,000 visitors last year) and also serves on the PCC of her local church, St Katharine's, Exbury.

Kate actively enjoys the museum world, supporting many of the London museums as a Patron, and visiting exhibitions. She was formerly Chairman of the Patrons at both the British Museum and Kew Gardens. She divides her time between London and Exbury.

Dr Ashok Roy

Dr Ashok Roy, FSA is a scientist and a leading analytical specialist in the material history of works of art, particularly Old Master paintings. His career has been in museum science from 1977 when he was appointed to the National Gallery's Scientific Department, of which he became Director in 1990. He was later appointed Director of Collections at the National Gallery from where he retired in 2016. He remains particularly interested in developing interdisciplinary study of works of art with curators and conservators with a view of presenting to a broad public the interest and value of understanding and preserving collections through material knowledge. To this end he has organised a number of exhibitions devoted to these subjects as well as many publications and lectures.

He is passionate about promoting the widest variety of free public access to the national collections, and ensuring that the results of research on collections are made available to visitors both physical and virtual. He believes that presenting the materials and making of works of art provides a powerful way of engaging new audiences, particularly younger visitors. He is also interested in the importance of environmental sustainability of museums as public institutions.

Timothy Schroder

Timothy Schroder is a historian and lecturer on the history of silver and goldsmiths' work. Previous roles include head of silver at Christie's, Curator of Decorative Arts at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and Consultant Curator at the V&A. In addition to being a trustee of the Wallace Collection, he is a past Prime Warden of the Goldsmiths' Company, a member of the Fabric Commission of Westminster Abbey and former chairman of the Prostate Cancer Research Centre.

Remuneration and Governance Code

Trustees of the Wallace Collection are not remunerated. These are short reappointments to third terms from 07 January 2023 until 06 July 2023 and have been made in accordance with the Cabinet Office's [Governance Code on Public Appointments](#). The appointments process is regulated by the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Under the Code, any significant political activity undertaken by an appointee in the last five years must be declared. This is defined as including holding office, public speaking, making a recordable donation, or candidature for election. Kate de Rothschild-Agius, Ashok Roy and Timothy Schroder have declared no activity.

[UKAEA and Commonwealth Fusion Systems sign agreement to advance fusion energy](#)

UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and Commonwealth Fusion Systems (CFS) have announced a new trans-Atlantic agreement to advance commercial fusion energy.

The new five-year Collaboration Framework Agreement establishes the terms under which a series of work projects between US-based CFS, from Massachusetts, and UKAEA will support the development of fusion energy and related technologies.

This agreement is the result of a shared mission of both organisations to leverage innovative research and the speed of the private sector to support the fastest path to low carbon commercial fusion energy – based on the same processes that power the sun and stars.

Prof. Ian Chapman, UKAEA CEO, said: "Achieving our shared missions to deliver low carbon and sustainable fusion energy involves working at the forefront of science, engineering, and technology. This new collaboration agreement with CFS will help push these developments and capabilities, drive innovation and accelerate progress."

“Fusion presents an exciting opportunity for the UK and we’re proud our ground-breaking work here continues to support economic growth and attracts such leading international partners.”

Bob Mumgaard, CFS CEO, added: “CFS and UKAEA have a mutual interest and strong belief that public-private collaborations such as this represent a way to accelerate advances in commercial fusion energy technology and support CFS’ plans to deliver commercial fusion as quickly as possible.

“UKAEA is a leader in fusion energy research and CFS plans to establish a UK presence as we leverage the combined skills and talents of both organisations to develop the fastest path to commercial fusion power on the grid.”

The scope of the collaboration could include:

- Operations teams sharing and learning best practices from fusion experiments
- Access to fusion-adjacent technology facilities, including robotics
- Collaboration on fuel cycle technologies, neutronics modelling, systems integration models, advanced manufacturing, diagnostics, remote handling and remote maintenance
- Collaborative work to identify and answer emerging plasma physics questions

Last month, the UK government confirmed that future fusion energy facilities will be regulated by the Environment Agency (EA) and Health & Safety Executive (HSE). This provides clarity to developers of prototype and demonstration fusion facilities currently being planned, including the Spherical Tokamak for Energy Production (STEP), UKAEA’s ambitious plan to accelerate the delivery of sustainable fusion energy.

[Oxfordshire joins as sixth trailblazer for charging reform](#)

- Oxfordshire joins five other local authorities as a trailblazer for government’s charging reform
- Trailblazers will implement the new adult social care charging reform system early ahead of national roll out in October 2023
- Charging reforms will mean no one will have to face unpredictable care costs in the future

Oxfordshire is the latest local authority to join as a trailblazer for the government’s social care reform. It will implement the changes of the charging reform early to end unpredictable care costs for local care receivers.

To ensure a smooth transition from the current charging system Oxfordshire joins Wolverhampton, Blackpool, Cheshire East, Newham, North Yorkshire to make changes early ahead of national roll out in October next year. This will include the lifetime cap for care costs of £86,000 for anyone receiving care in England, and a more generous means test to determine financial support from local authorities.

The government selected the six local authorities to ensure there was a representative cross section of communities so that any insight, evidence and lessons learned from this initiative would be helpful to all providers, local authorities and areas across England.

Minister for Care and Mental Health, Gillian Keegan, said:

It's great to have Oxfordshire join our trailblazers to implement the charging reform early.

Oxfordshire, along with our other trailblazers, will pave the way ensuring we learn from any insight, evidence and lessons to help providers and local authorities across England in the future. We're looking forward to working with them to make the ambitious change a reality.

Councillor Tim Bearder, Oxfordshire County Council Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care said:

We know reform in adult social care is needed to remove the unpredictable care costs people face as they get older.

Oxfordshire is a national leader in adult social care and being a part of this small group of early adopters gives us the opportunity to influence how the programme will be rolled out and share our best practice with national government.

The government's charging reform will be funded by the Health and Social Care Levy, which is set to raise more than £5.4 billion including £3.6 billion to reform the way people pay for their social care.

From October next year, no-one starting to receive care will pay more than £86,000 over their lifetime and no-one with assets of less than £20,000 will have to make any contribution from their savings or housing wealth – an increase from £14,250.

Means-tested support will be available for people with assets between £20,000 and £100,000, with this upper limit more than four times the current limit.

The trailblazers will shape the government's approach to the implementation of the charging reform across England, by allowing the Department of Health and Social Care to trial key aspects of the reforms.

The initiative will produce valuable insight, evidence and lessons to aid the government in monitoring progress and identifying challenges to improve understanding of how it'll work in practice.

These six local authorities will work with the department to educate and inform other local authorities with a series of events taking place before the final rollout.

[£41 million contract for bomb disposal protection supports 100 UK jobs](#)

News story

Personnel disposing of suspected bombs in the UK are being equipped with next-generation digital protection.



- New critical protection for personnel working with explosives
- Technology obstructs detonation airwaves from enemy devices
- £41 million contract supports local SMEs and 100 UK jobs

Military specialists called on to dispose of suspected bombs in the UK are being equipped with next-generation digital protection against remotely-triggered devices.

The life-saving technology will search the airwaves for remote control signals that may be attempting to detonate an explosive device, allowing skilled Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) personnel to block them using this cutting-edge digital technique.

A £41 million contract placed with Leonardo has created 10 jobs with 100 roles supported around the country, including 35 at Leonardo in Basildon and Southampton. Around 50% of the contract value will be delivered by small and medium-sized enterprises across the UK.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Jeremy Quin, said:

Our personnel work in hostile environments on dangerous tasks to keep our nation and its people safe. This multi-million-pound contract with Team Endure not only delivers crucial innovative protection for our Armed Forces but is in large part being delivered by UK SMEs.

The British Army's 11 EOD team, Search Regiment of the Royal Logistic Corps and the Royal Naval Fleet Diving Squadron will be provided with vehicle-mounted and portable systems.

DE&S CEO, Sir Simon Bollom said:

This British Army regiment carries out high risk duties often in direct protection of the public and it is essential that we provide them with the tools needed to carry out their job safely and effectively. Crucially the system is open architecture so it can be updated across its lifetime to ensure advancements in hostile technology can be countered.

First deliveries of the new equipment are due to take place from Autumn 2024, with a view to deploying the technology across the whole of Defence's specialist units responsible for explosive device and munitions disposal in 2025.

Major General Robin Anderton-Brown, UKStratCom Director Capability, said:

This capability shows the MOD exploiting the best available technology from our innovative SMEs here in the UK. In a system designed for the information age, the procurement approach and open architecture will allow us to upgrade, at pace, to respond to new threats and technology. This cutting edge, modular capability will ensure our personnel are best able to deal with the threats they face, now and into the future.