



## WHAT HAVE WE ACHIEVED?

# 2018

With the help of our many donors, members and grant-making Trusts, S&TC has had a successful year in influencing a number of wins for wild salmon and trout:

[www.salmon-trout.org](http://www.salmon-trout.org)

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## Salmon Farm Reform

S&TC can justifiably state that the leap forward during 2018 in the protection of wild salmon and sea trout from the impacts of open-cage salmon farming is down to us – we were the major catalyst in achieving two devastating Scottish Parliamentary Committee Reports into salmon farming and its impact on wild fish and the environment.

Our petition in 2016 led to the Inquiries taking place during 2018, and we led both written and oral evidence during their deliberations, including commissioning a report from Norwegian scientists - covering the Norwegian experience and its relevance to the situation in Scotland.

The two Parliamentary Inquiries were by:

Environment, Climate Change and Land Reform Committee – they conducted the first Inquiry and their Report included the one-liner: the status quo is no longer an option

The Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee then took on the Inquiry – their Autumn Report was highly critical of the way salmon farming is operated and regulated and presented 65 recommendations for improvement, including most of S&TC's main asks

S&TC's work for the foreseeable future will be to drive the REC Committee's recommendations through Government so that they are acted upon rather than ignored. In particular, we are looking for:

-  Scottish Government to adopt legal responsibility to protect wild salmon and sea trout from the impacts of salmon farming
-  An independent agency to regulate salmon farming against sea lice trigger levels that protect wild fish, with the sanction of forced harvest on persistent offenders.
-  A moratorium on establishing/expanding farms in sensitive locations and movement of existing farms away from migration routes
-  Incentives for companies to move into closed containment production

# North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organisation - NASCO

S&TC works internationally on wild salmon issues through NASCO, a pan-North Atlantic governmental forum for the conservation of wild salmon. S&TC's CEO is co-chair of the accredited NGOs, which gives us unprecedented influence at this highest level.

Amongst other issues, we have used NASCO to influence closure of the Scottish coastal mixed stock fisheries in 2016, the imminent closure of the English North East coastal salmon fisheries in 2019, and in pressurising the Scottish Government to address open-net salmon farming which, along with our 2016 petition, led to the Parliamentary Inquiries this year (see above).

S&TC's CEO was also the NGO representative on the drafting group re-writing the templates and guidelines for the process by which NASCO Parties must report progress on salmon management and conservation actions over the next 5 years. He also sits on the Review Group analysing each annual report which, again, gives S&TC significant influence over salmon issues at the international level.

## North East English Commercial Drift and Coastal Salmon Fisheries

As already stated, S&TC was closely involved in the closure of the Scottish coastal nets in 2016, following our work at NASCO and our official complaint to Europe under the EU Habitats Directive that Scotland was not managing its wild salmon stocks responsibly.

The Scottish action left England in an embarrassing situation in that the north east English drift and coastal nets exploited between 30% (Yorkshire coast) and 70% (drift nets) salmon bound for Scottish rivers. Through NASCO and lobbying with colleagues in the England Fisheries Group, we influenced the EA to announce new byelaws in December that will stop the north east nets killing salmon as from 2019 – a great result after many years of hard NGO work. We are concerned that sea trout will still be exploited in some of the north east coastal nets and we will be seeking more action in 2019 to protect sea trout.

# Riverfly Census

Our main work in England and Wales has been around water quality and its impact on wild trout, salmon and all other water-dependent life. Our 3-year Riverfly Census Project, which analysed invertebrates from 20 rivers across England and Wales to species level to provide evidence of various pollutants on river health.

Census results have shown up the alarmingly poor condition of some of our most high-profile rivers, particularly from sediment and phosphate, and we co-authored a peer-reviewed paper showing the lethal impact of those two stressors on mayflies. The full Riverfly Census report is currently being compiled but has already influenced new invertebrate species and abundance targets for chalkstreams the Test and Itchen report is now available.

This work will continue in other rivers across the UK next year, through our new SMARTivers Project, based on training and utilising high resolution citizen science to undertake the Census sampling and analytical work against benchmarking and auditing by professional entomologists - more information [here](#).

We are also sampling daily phosphate and chemical levels on local chalkstreams and using a case study on the Upper Itchen at Alresford Salad's washing plant to fight for the elimination of toxic chemical discharges into SAC rivers – the plant currently washes down with chemicals at the end of each day and discharges straight into the river. Our sampling below their outflow shows the river to be in an appalling ecological condition. We have major chemical sampling plans for other rivers in 2019.

## Other S&TC Policy Work

There has been plenty of other work this year, especially concerning water abstraction reform, agricultural post-Brexit policy, barriers to migration, hatcheries and predation. We have a seat on the EA's Water Leaders' Group, which covers all environmental water issues, and the National Drought Group, where we have represented wild fisheries since 2011.

# Thank you.

None of this work would be possible without the support of our members, donors and grant-making Trusts. Thank you very much indeed – your funding has been vital and very much appreciated, and we hope our success over the past year have made your support worthwhile.