



**Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs**

From George Eustice MP
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Dear Rachael

Thank you for your letter of 5 December 2017 on the impact of the North East Coast drift net fishery on salmon stock levels in the River Tweed. I apologise for the delay in replying.

The Government is concerned about the widespread decline in salmon stocks that is currently seen, not just in English rivers, but throughout the North Atlantic. To address the decline in salmon stocks, the Environment Agency has initiated a multi-agency programme called the Salmon 5 Point Approach, with other relevant government and non-governmental organisations. This programme is intended to maximise the production of healthy wild smolts from our rivers and to understand better the problems that these young salmon experience at sea.

Drift net fisheries exploit salmon across a number of rivers, and it is therefore necessary to manage that activity in order to protect the weakest contributing stocks. Policy in England has for some years been to phase out mixed stock salmon fisheries where it is not possible to protect the weakest stocks. The Environment Agency is therefore looking at changing the regulatory management of salmon fisheries as part of its Salmon 5 Point Approach commitment of "further reducing the exploitation of salmon by net and rod fisheries".

In August 2017 the Environment Agency consulted on possible options to control the exploitation of salmon from our coasts and rivers, and to protect salmon stocks across England and in the Border Esk. Having now finished assessing the responses received from that initial consultation exercise, the Environment Agency have made proposals for controlling the exploitation of salmon from our coasts and rivers to protect salmon stocks across England and in the Border Esk.

In relation to drift net fisheries, the proposals are to close all drift net salmon fisheries in 2018, and to stop the take of salmon from the majority of the remaining net fisheries by 2019. The advertising of proposed byelaws to deliver these measures, due to commence in February 2018, will form the final part of the consultation process in order to give the opportunity to raise any formal objections at that time.

George Eustice
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