

Protection measures proposed for wild salmon

A SERIES of recommendations have been published in a new report seeking to minimise the impact of fish farming on wild salmon.

The Salmon Interactions Working Group (SIWG) was established by the Scottish Government amid critically low population levels of the species, as well as sea trout.

It has now published 42 recommendations to protect wild fish, including fines for instances of stock escaping from fish farms.

John Goodlad, SIWG chairman, said: "Although these recommendations cover a large number of issues, we believe they complement each other.

"To that extent these are presented to the Scottish Government as a package of measures which we believe should be implemented in full.

"If our recommendations are accepted, then I believe it will be possible to build a robust and durable framework that will minimise the impact of fish farming on wild salmonids."

The report indicates a professional and collaborative working relationship within the shared spaces where wild and farmed fish are present must be established for progress to be made.

It calls for a reformed aquaculture regulatory regime which is "fit for purpose" and protects wild migratory species by addressing any negative impacts detected through monitoring.

A number of recommendations are also made for sites which "best scientific evidence" indicates present an adverse impact on wild salmonids.

Those who have a licence for fish farming should also carry out recording and reporting of a weekly sea louse count.