

Rural Economy and Connectivity Committee

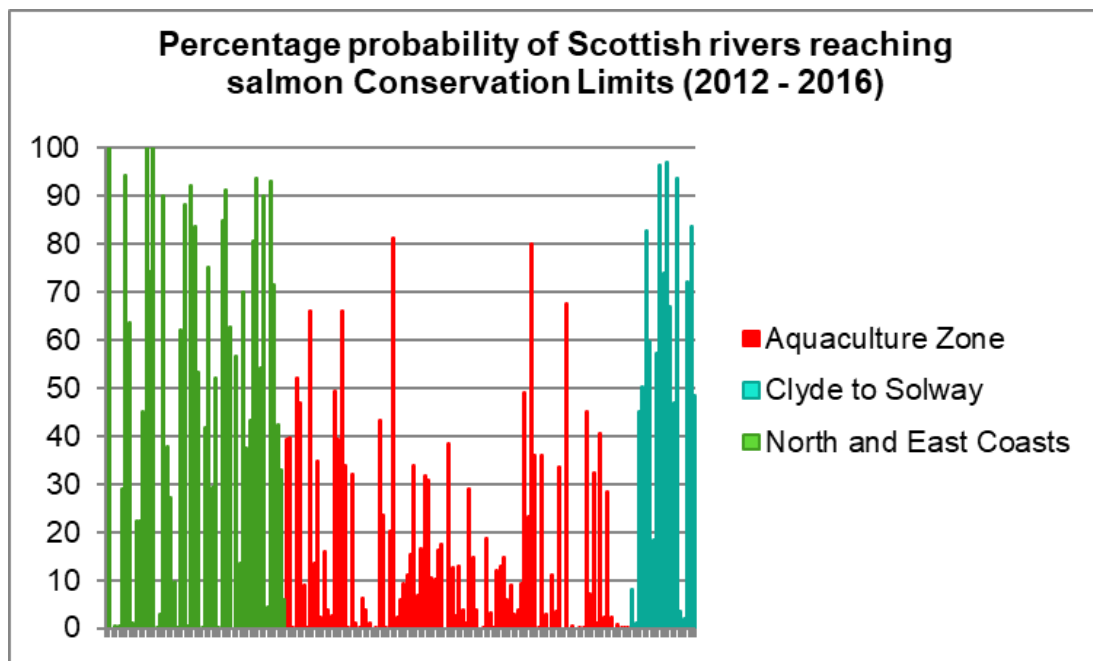
Post-evidence note from Salmon and Trout Conservation Scotland

At the Oral Evidence session on 14th March, there was discussion of Conservation Limits applied to wild Atlantic salmon stocks in Scottish rivers. I said I would provide the Committee with a graph drawn up by S&TCS to illustrate the percentage chance that the Conservation Limit has been reached in Scotland's salmon rivers.

The raw data for the mean figure for each river is published by Marine Scotland Science in The Application of Conservation Limits for Atlantic Salmon by Region – see <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/fishreform/licence/status/limits> - and the graph below shows the probability, in Marine Scotland Science's estimation, of each river achieving its Conservation Limit.

MSS then grades each river according to the percentage probability of it meeting its Conservation Limit, as the Committee discussed – see <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/marine/Salmon-Trout-Coarse/fishreform/licence/status>

The graph below starts, at the left, with the Tweed and proceeds 'anti-clockwise' around Scotland, ending in the Solway. The Hebrides are included in the red 'Aquaculture Zone' after Cape Wrath



What the graph shows is that the great majority of rivers within the 'Aquaculture Zone' of the west Highlands and Hebrides are in the worst-performing Category 3, and that the main 'Aquaculture Zone' includes a markedly disproportionate concentration of rivers which are far below the 60% probability level (of producing sufficient salmon eggs) required to lift them into Category 2.

While S&TCS recognises both the range of other threats to wild salmonid populations, and the shortcomings of the Conservation Limits approach, wild salmon stocks in rivers in the Aquaculture Zone are in a disproportionately poor state, as compared to stocks outside that Aquaculture Zone.