



# Association of Salmon Fishery Boards

## Comments on the Consultation on Priority Marine Features November 2013

### Introduction

The Association of Salmon Fishery Boards is the representative body for Scotland's 41 District Salmon Fishery Boards (DSFBs) including the River Tweed Commission (RTC), which have a statutory responsibility to protect and improve salmon and sea trout fisheries. The Association and Boards work to create the environment in which sustainable fisheries for salmon and sea trout can be enjoyed. Conservation of fish stocks, and the habitats on which they depend, is essential and many DSFB's operate riparian habitat enhancement schemes and have voluntarily adopted 'catch and release' practices, which in some cases are made mandatory by the introduction of Salmon Conservation Regulations. ASFB creates policies that seek where possible to protect wider biodiversity and our environment as well as enhancing the economic benefits for our rural economy that result from angling. An analysis completed in 2004 demonstrated that freshwater angling in Scotland results in the Scottish economy producing over £100 million worth of annual output, which supports around 2,800 jobs and generates nearly £50million in wages and self-employment into Scottish households, most of which are in rural areas.

### General comments

We welcome the opportunity to comment on this consultation. We support the Scottish Government's three-pillar approach as set out in the Marine Scotland's Marine Nature Conservation Strategy. We are particularly supportive of the continued inclusion of the marine phase of the life cycle of Atlantic salmon and sea trout.

### Specific Comments

**Q1. Do you agree with the recommended list of Priority Marine Features as the basis for targeting future marine conservation action in Scotland's seas?**

Yes/ We particularly support the continued inclusion of the marine phase of the life cycle of Atlantic salmon and sea trout on the list of PMFs. Whilst there are clearly some issues with the health of these stocks relating to the freshwater environment, it is widely recognised that marine survival of these species has declined massively over recent decades. We believe that inclusion of these species in the list of PMFs will help address some of the issues in the marine environment. We also support many of the other species listed, as we believe that in many cases Atlantic salmon and sea trout would also benefit from additional protection afforded to these other species.

**Q2. Are there other issues that have not been highlighted in this consultation that you would like to mention?**

No comment.