

Reporting Skin Damage in Wild Atlantic Salmon - 17 June 2019

Scottish Government's Fish Health Inspectorate (FHI) has been responding to reports of wild adult salmon displaying skin damage such as reddening (petechial haemorrhaging) around the fins and belly (ventral surface), inflamed (swollen/red) vent and associated fungal infection. Further information will be provided when the laboratory results are available from fish sampled across a number of Scottish rivers.

In the meantime, observations of adult salmon demonstrating clinical signs of infection or damage should be notified to the local District Salmon Fishery Board (DSFB) and the FHI. Considerations are:

Moribund or lethargic fish should be targeted where sampling is considered appropriate;

There is no requirement at this stage to remove fish with damage for disease control purposes;

Wild adult Atlantic salmon returning to rivers to spawn can naturally present with some physical damage due to a number of environmental factors;

FHI sampling will be prioritised on moribund fish that can be maintained alive (in keep nets or suitably bio-secure tank facilities);

Moribund fish that cannot be maintained alive should have details recorded and photographs taken, where possible, before being returned to rivers. Details should be sent to local DSFBs and FHI;

If local wild fishery interests determine that moribund fish are not to be returned to the river, they should be percussion stunned or suitably dispatched and maintained in a refrigerator at 4°C, until a determination on sampling is undertaken;

Good biosecurity practice should be followed when handling affected fish with hands, clothing and equipment being suitably cleaned and disinfected, where appropriate.