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Wales

# Know Your River – River Neath Salmon and Sea Trout Catchment Summary

## Introduction

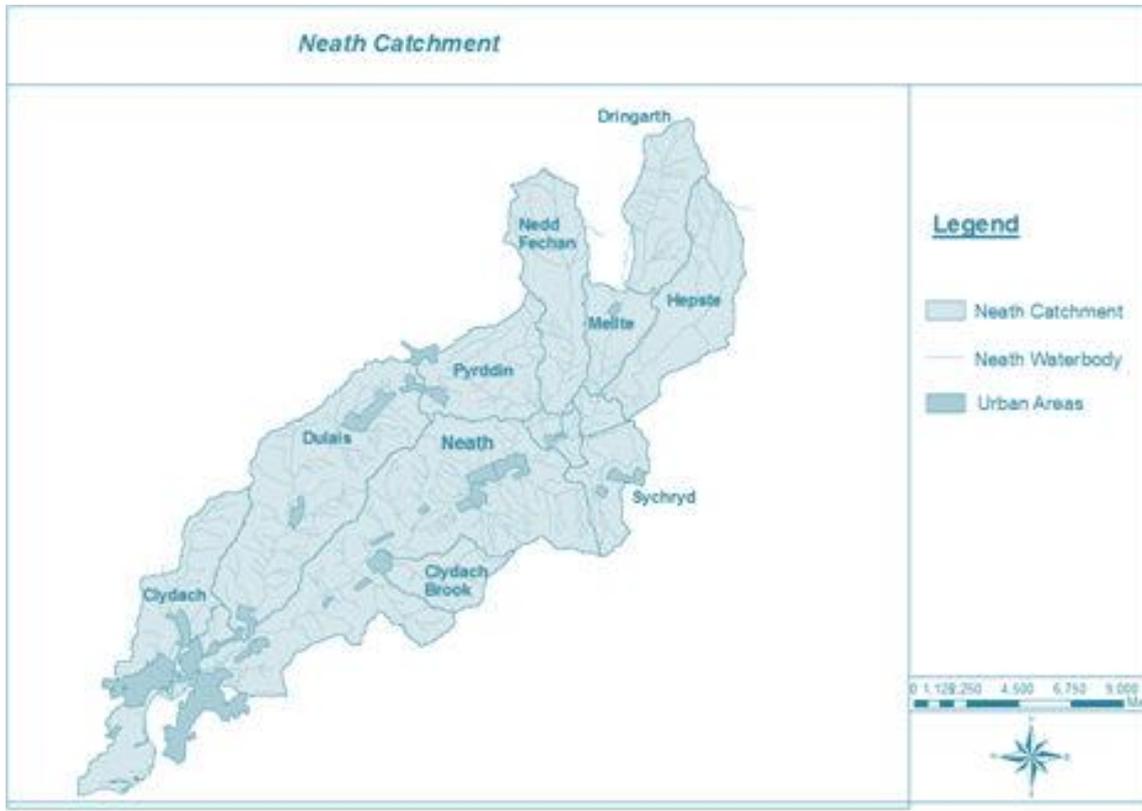
This report describes the status of the salmon and sea trout populations in the Neath catchments. Bringing together data from rod catches, stock assessments and juvenile monitoring, it will describe the factors limiting the populations and set out the challenges faced in the catchment.

Action tables set out habitat improvements to restore freshwater productivity of salmon and sea trout populations. These tables also include some work which will be carried out by our partner organisations, not just Natural Resources Wales (NRW).

NRW has a duty, defined in the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 to have Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR) at the core of everything that we do. By applying the principles of SMNR in all of our activities - from agriculture, forestry and flood defence to development planning - we are undertaking catchment-wide initiatives that will deliver for fish stock improvements. Our reports highlight the importance of considering the whole catchment when identifying and addressing fisheries issues; and of working with partners.

NRW is committed to reporting on the status of salmon stocks in all of our principal salmon rivers for the Salmon Action Plans and condition assessments under the Habitats Directive in SAC rivers; all fish species in all of our rivers are reported for the Water Framework Directive (WFD). This report will fulfil these commitments and provide an informative and useful summary of stock status and remedial work planned, for our customers, specifically anglers, fishery and land owners; as well as our partners.

## River Neath



### The River

The river Neath flows west from its source in the Brecon Beacons to its mouth at Baglan Bay. The River Neath originates between Fan Frailn and Fan Nedd in the Brecon Beacons and is joined by tributaries the Pyrddin, Hepste, Mellte and Sychryd. These upper tributaries are relatively unaltered, and many flow of series of impressive natural waterfalls. The River then flows through the Vale of Neath and the main population centres of Glyyneath, Resolven and Neath

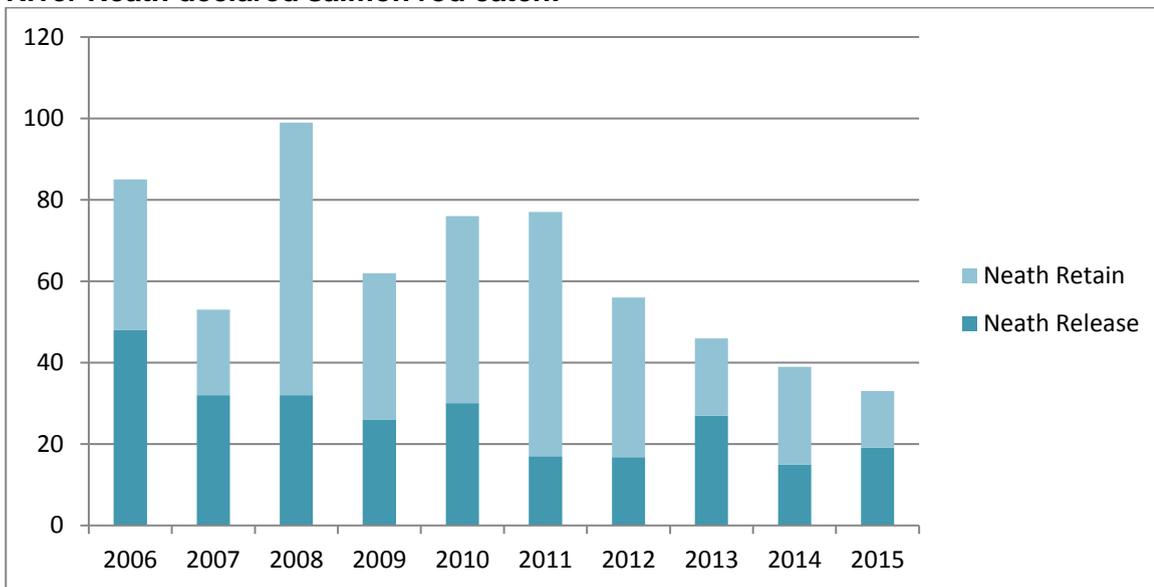
The Neath supports a locally important salmon and sea trout (sewin) fishery. Sea trout are the principal salmonid, with reasonable numbers of salmon also present.

## Rod Catches

The following graphs show the total declared road catches, including numbers released or killed for salmon and sea trout on the Neath.

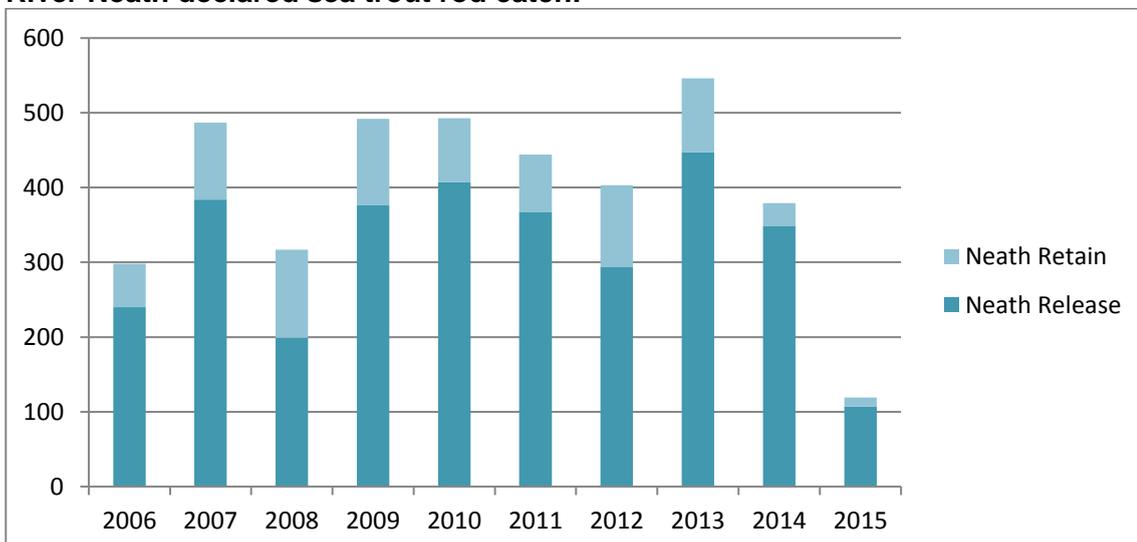
Declared salmon rod catches are variable over the 10 year period. The average proportion of the salmon catch returned alive for the period shown is 44%. The release rate in 2015 was 58% which is well below the Wales average of 60%.

### River Neath declared salmon rod catch:



Declared rod catches for sea trout are also variable over the 10 year period, but all reported catches exceed those of salmon for all years. The average proportion of sea trout catch returned alive for the period shown is 80%. The release rate in 2015 was 90% which is above the average figure for Wales of 72%.

### River Neath declared sea trout rod catch:



## Stock Status

### Conservation of Salmon

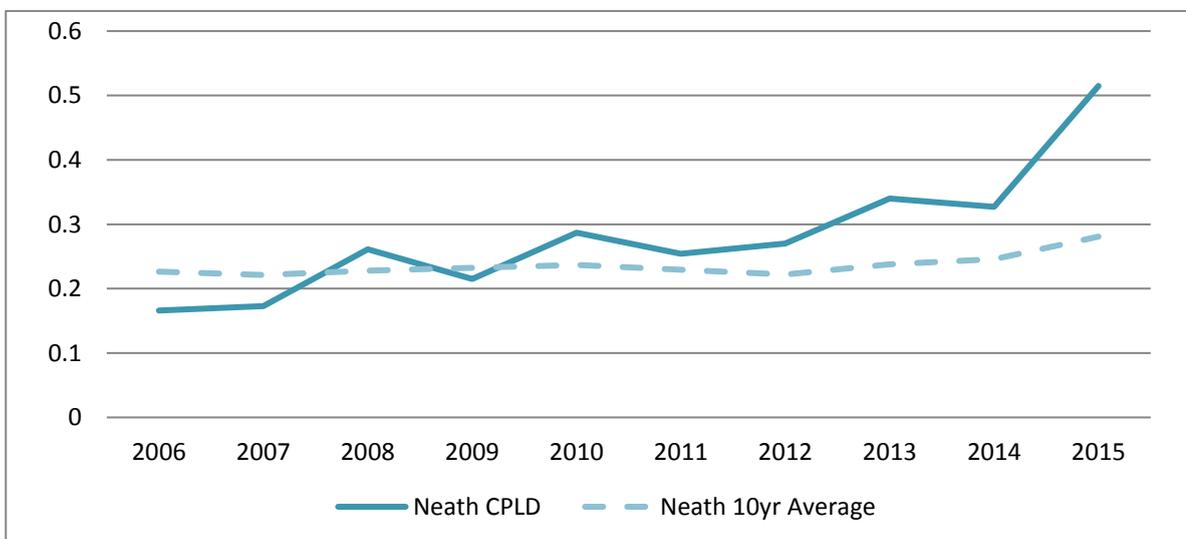
Salmon stock status is assessed through the use of 'Conservation Limits' which provide an objective reference point against which to assess the status of salmon stocks in individual rivers. The numbers of salmon a river can produce (and consequently the catches that the stocks support) are a function of the quality and quantity of accessible spawning and rearing area. This is why, in general, big rivers have larger catches and have correspondingly bigger total spawning requirements than small rivers. Thus, for any given rivers there should be an optimum level of stock which the CL seeks to protect. The conservation limit represents the number of eggs that must be deposited each year within a given catchment in order to conserve salmon stocks in the future.

In the case of the Neath, the low reported rod catches of salmon mean that it is not possible to obtain an accurate estimation of egg deposition for the river, due to the potential errors involved. Assessment of compliance against the conservation limit has therefore not been attempted.

### Conservation of Sea Trout

Our approach to assessing sea trout stock performance is still under development. It is based on catch trends in the last three years compared with those in the previous ten. The assessment gives an early warning about potential problems and assists with considering whether any further management actions are required. It provides an indication of changes in fishery performance, though this is not always a reflection of stock performance.

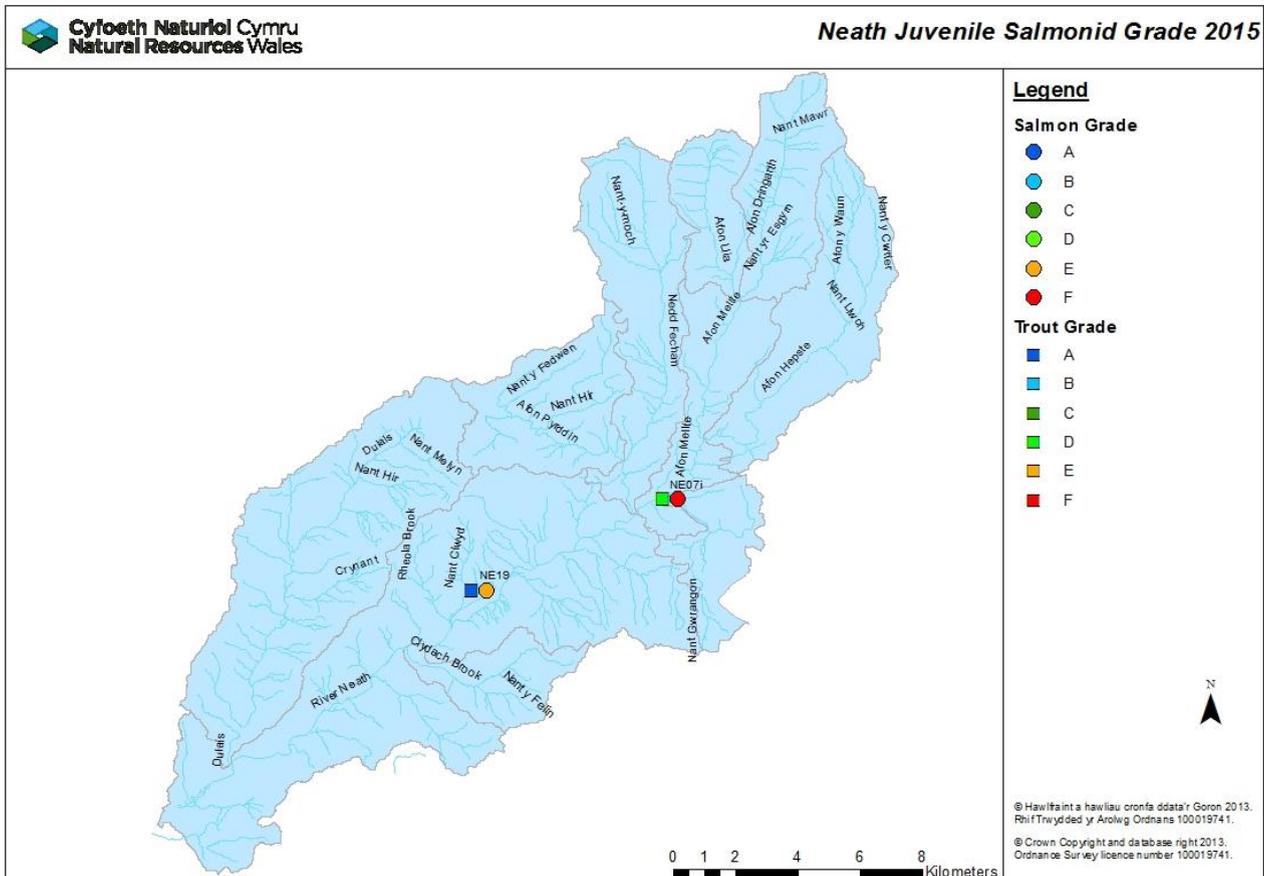
Catch per License Day (CPLD) is the average number of fish caught for each day fished on the river and as such accounts for the variability in the amount of fishing effort between years. These statistics can be a better guide than simply looking at the total catch. The CPLD figures for the Neath for the period 2006 to 2015 are shown below. Catch per Licence Day on the Neath is relatively stable, and the Neath sea trout fishery is currently classified as **'Not at risk'**.



## Juvenile Monitoring

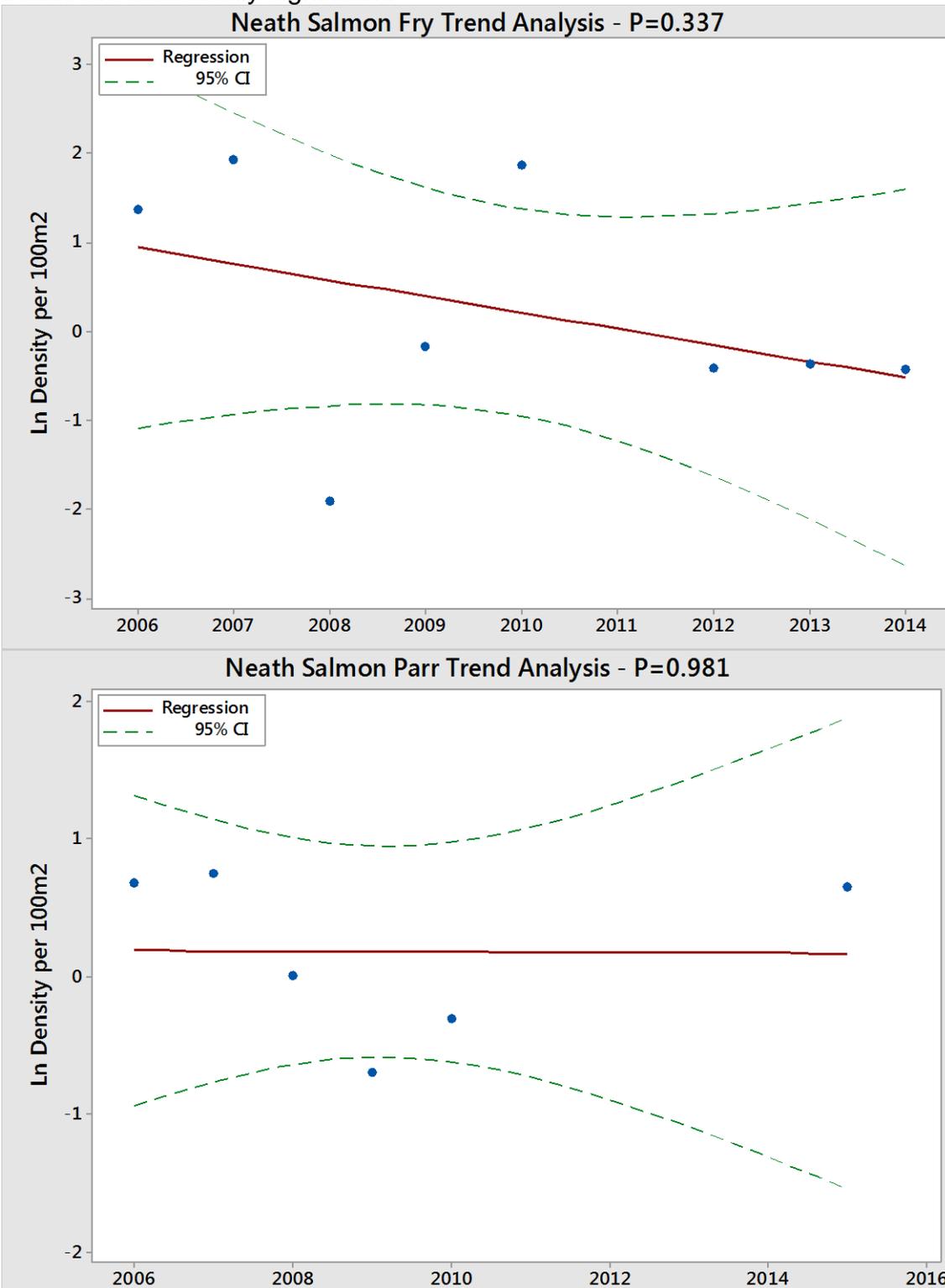
The following map shows results of the 2015 juvenile salmonid populations gathered from electro fishing surveys. They display the National Fish Classification (NFC) grades which have been developed to evaluate and compare the results of fish population surveys in a consistent manner. The NFC ranks survey data by comparing fish abundance at the survey sites with sites nationally where juvenile salmonids are present. Sites are classified into categories A to F, depending on densities of juvenile salmonids at the site. The following table shows the values and classification of NFC.

GRADE	Descriptor	Interpretation
<b>A</b>	Excellent	In the top 20% for a fishery of this type
<b>B</b>	Good	In the top 40% for a fishery of this type
<b>C</b>	Fair	In the middle 20% for a fishery of this type
<b>D</b>	Fair	In the bottom 40% for a fishery of this type
<b>E</b>	Poor	In the bottom 20% for a fishery of this type
<b>F</b>	Fishless	No fish of this type present

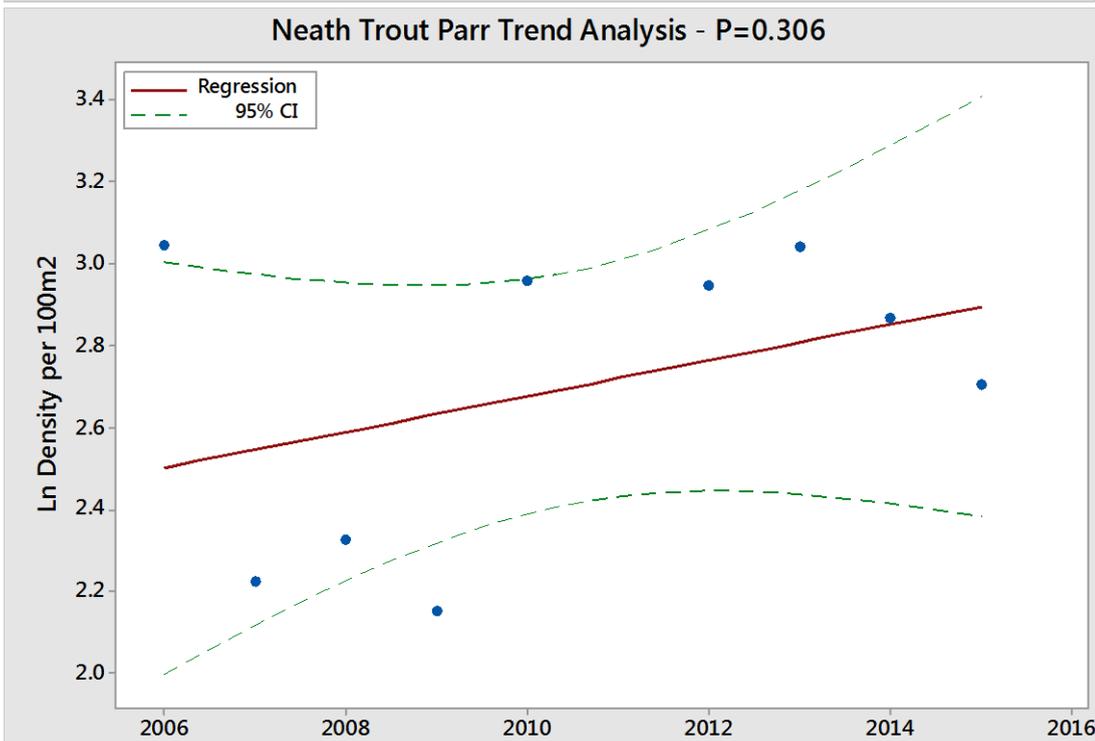
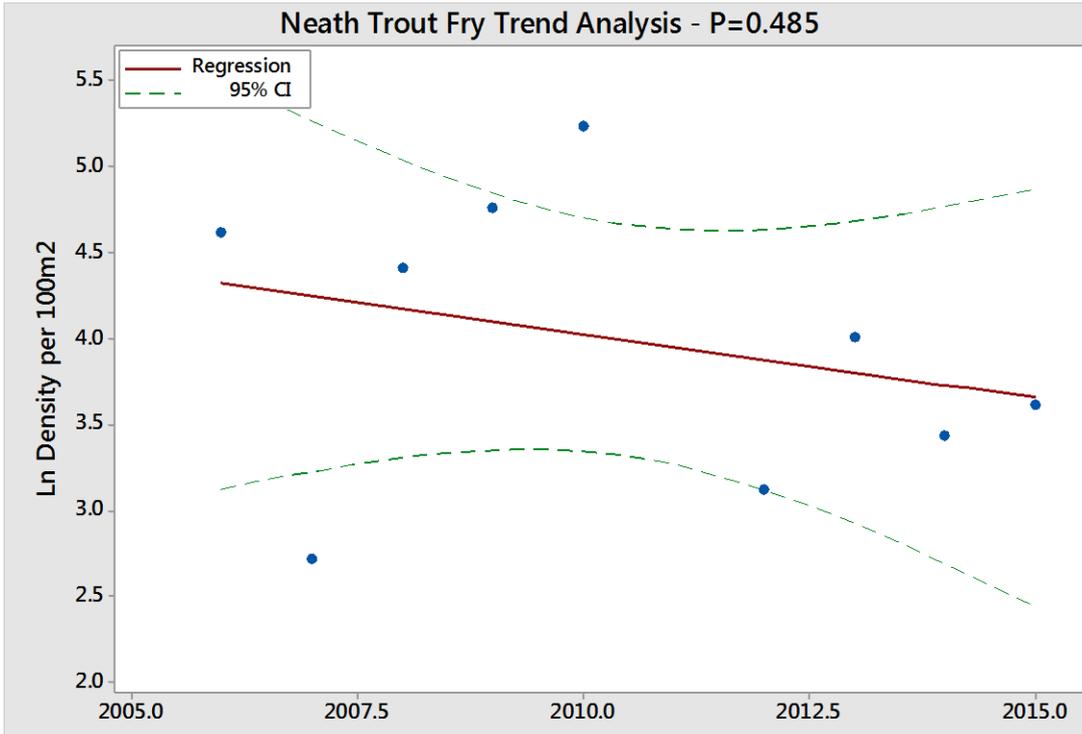


### Juvenile Trend Analysis

Juvenile salmon numbers show a downward trend for both fry and parr but neither of these trends are statistically significant.



Numbers of juvenile trout have varied over the last 10 years and both fry and parr show a slight upward trend. Parr data shows a more obvious upward trend than fry but neither of these are statistically significant.





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## Fisheries Mitigation Plan

Site	Mitigation action	Benefits	Lead	Partner(s)	Timescales for delivery
Neath	<b>Habitat improvements:</b> We will investigate where there is opportunity to improve habitat for fish through improving access over barriers, restoration of riparian and instream habitat, including control of invasive species	More natural river system, reduced siltation, increased flow diversity, improved spawning gravels and juvenile habitat. Improved fish numbers.	NRW		Ongoing
	<b>Water Framework Directive:</b> We will continue to work to ensure no deterioration, monitor the status of the environment and investigate the causes of failures. Together with our partners we will look to put in place measures that protect and improve the status of the water environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Waterbodies protected and improved</li> <li>WFD waterbodies achieving Good Status/Potential</li> </ul>	NRW	NRW Wildlife trusts Local Authorities Landowners DCWW	Ongoing
	<b>Enforcement:</b> Action to reduce illegal activity on information provided and investigations.	Reduce illegal activity, more fish remain in the system.	NRW	Stakeholders SW Wales Police	Ongoing