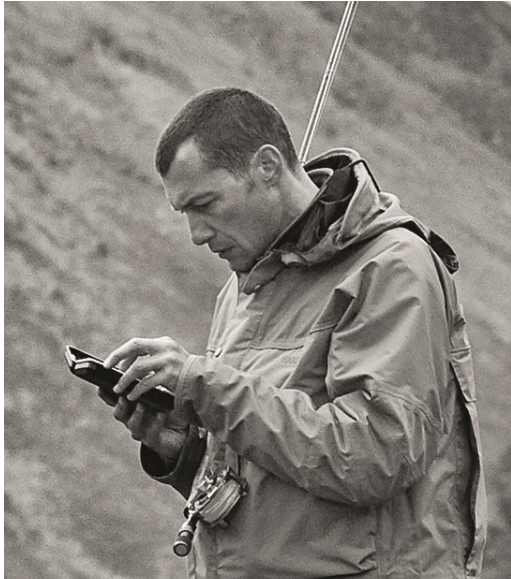




What do wild salmon mean to me?

Fin Wilson



Fin Wilson is a professional fly-fishing guide and instructor and a member of the Greys Pro Team. He manages three miles of the upper Tweed, fishes extensively around Scotland, as well as further afield, and writes features for Trout & Salmon magazine.

Critical is the word that best encapsulates what the Atlantic Salmon means to me. Critical because it epitomises the wildness and wonder of nature, of survival against the odds and of life-long struggle.

Critical because it is such an iconic species to Scotland, inextricably linked to our past and permeating our culture. For many of us the salmon is embedded deep in our psyche.

What better species, a fish of raw power, mystery and beauty, to associate with this staggeringly picturesque country of rugged hills and limitless water? Critical as it links us to the sea and to all the other nations where salmon swim.

Unfortunately, however, critical too because that is the stage we are now at when it comes to the health and future survival of wild salmon. Over exploitation at sea and internally (historically), over predation, global warming, countless hydro-electric schemes with no thought for spawning salmonids and, of course, the scourge of fish farms particularly on the west coast. The failure of successive governments to protect wild stocks from the devastating effects of sea lice infestation from fish farms all around our coast is quite simply a national disgrace. It is madness, sacrificing the real thing for artificially reared substitutes that

bear little resemblance to the natural product.

Just imagine what it must have been like when almost every river and migratory loch system in Scotland teemed with the king of fish. It is a dream.

Our rivers are generally in fine health, but the number of salmon returning continues to be on a downward trend. The reasons why are varied and complex but now is the time when everyone who possibly can must come together with the common goal of safeguarding the long-term future and sustainability of wild salmon. It is critical.



Discover more about the importance of wild Atlantic salmon at:
www.fms.scot/what-do-wild-salmon-mean-to-me/
[#wildsalmonmatter](https://twitter.com/wildsalmonmatter)

